

## Who Is at Risk for Pneumococcal Pneumonia?

Pneumococcal pneumonia is a serious lung infection that can strike people at any age, anywhere and anytime; however, some people may have a higher risk than others. Being at least 50 years of age or having certain chronic health conditions can make you more susceptible for pneumococcal pneumonia.<sup>1</sup>

Risk factors for pneumococcal pneumonia include: <sup>1,2</sup>	
<b>Adults</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aging Adult – 50 years or older are at increased risk due to the related decline of the immune system</li><li>• Certain chronic illnesses, such as lung, heart, liver or kidney disease; asthma; diabetes; COPD</li><li>• Conditions that weaken the immune system, including HIV/AIDS, cancer, or a damaged or absent spleen</li><li>• Recent respiratory infection, including the flu</li><li>• Cochlear implants or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks</li><li>• Cigarette smoking; or alcoholism</li></ul>

Even with the above risk factors, there are ways for individuals to help protect themselves or their families against serious infectious diseases, like pneumococcal pneumonia:

- Good hygiene can reduce the risk of spreading infection between people
- Coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your sleeve will help to avoid passing germs to others
- Maintaining your health, particularly by managing chronic conditions such as diabetes or COPD, can help reduce your chances of being infected<sup>3</sup>
- Vaccination is also an important step to help protect against pneumococcal pneumonia

Consult your physician to make sure that you understand your personal risk, take the appropriate steps to help protect yourself and make sure that you are up to date with your vaccinations.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Pneumococcal Disease. Risk Factors & Transmission.

<http://www.cdc.gov/pneumococcal/about/risk-transmission.html>. Updated June 6, 2013. Accessed October 6, 2014

<sup>2</sup> Mandell G, Bennett J, Dolin R. Mandell, Douglas and Bennett's Principles and Practice of Infectious Diseases. 7th Edition. Streptococcus Pneumoniae. 2623-2642.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Pneumonia can be Prevented - Vaccines can Help. <http://www.cdc.gov/features/pneumonia/>. Updated September 29, 2014. Accessed October 6, 2014