

CHILDREN  
WITH

# pneumonia



## Children with pneumonia

### General information:

Pneumonia in children is often caused by a virus, but may also be caused by a bacterial infection. Virus pneumonia cannot be treated with antibiotics, but bacterial pneumonia can.

### How is it contracted?

Virus can be found in the infected child's mucus and spittle. Children are infected when they breathe in small droplets from coughing or sneezing and after having been in contact with hands, toys etc. that are contaminated with mucus and spittle.

Bacterial infections often occur if the bacteria that are normally present in the throat move to the lungs and develop an inflammation.



## Symptoms:

Common cold symptoms:

- Coughing
- Breathing difficulties with rapid breathing
- Increased muscular activity may result in notches on the neck and between and under the ribs. There is increased use of the stomach muscles, a rattle of mucus in the throat, and possibly a wheezing sound when your child exhales
- Fever (babies do not always run a fever)
- Possibly pain in connection with breathing and coughing.

## Good advice:

- Offer the child plenty to drink. Liquids make the mucus thinner and therefore easier to cough up
- Make sure the child is not too warmly dressed if it runs a fever
- Elevate the headboard on the child's bed – this will make breathing easier. Remember also to change the child's position in bed – this loosens the mucus and makes it easier to cough. The child may sleep on both sides, sit up, move/play as much as possible
- Fresh air. Air out the room several times a day
- Avoid passive smoking. It only makes frequent infections more likely

- Do not give cough medicine as it may prevent the thick mucus from being coughed up.

## When to see a doctor?

Contact a doctor if the child:

- runs a high temperature and its breathing is rapid, wheezing and difficult
- seems tired, weak, and not interested in playing
- refuses to drink
- has poor contact with you
- makes you worry and you feel insecure.

Contact your general practitioner first because he/she knows your child better than the doctor on call. You can also get good advice and guidance from your health visitor.

## Treatment:

- You may give your child painkillers as agreed with a doctor
- Antibiotics if the pneumonia is caused by bacteria.

## Childcare:

The child can return to childcare when the fever has gone and breathing is normal again.

## Parental guidelines

These guidelines have been prepared by a working group set up by the departments of paediatrics in Herning, Randers, Skejby and Viborg.

The intention with these guidelines is to provide parents with advice across the following sectors: health visitors, general practitioners family doctors, doctors on call, and the staff at paediatric admission wards in the Central Denmark Region.

The parental guidelines can be seen and downloaded from the internet on the web site [www.fv.rm.dk](http://www.fv.rm.dk)

You may order additional copies from Rikke Dalsgaard,  
Koncern Kvalitet, Central Denmark Region,  
Skottenborg 26, 8800 Viborg. [rikke.dalsgaard@stab.rm.dk](mailto:rikke.dalsgaard@stab.rm.dk)

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