Symptoms of pneumonia [1]

Dear Alice,

What are the symptoms of pneumonia?

?Flu-ish

Answer

Dear Flu-ish,

The symptoms of pneumonia typically include fever, chills, and shortness of breath, as well as a cough with yellow-green phlegm or occasionally blood. Chest pain with breathing can also be a symptom of pneumonia, which occurs as a result of inflammation of the membrane lining the lungs and chest cavity. Pneumonia is diagnosed through a physical exam, when a physician listens to a patient's chest with a stethoscope. Further testing includes a chest x-ray, examination of a sputum culture, and blood tests to check for signs of infection.

Pneumonia, which is an inflammation of the lungs due to infection, is caused by viruses or bacteria in most cases. Though less common, pneumonia can also result from organisms like yeast, fungi, or protozoa in people with immunodeficiency disorders.

The two main types of pneumonia that exist are lobar pneumonia and bronchopneumonia, though other types of pneumonia do exist such as Legionnaires Disease. Lobar affects one lobe of one lung initially, while in broncho the airways (bronchioles) experience initial inflammation which is then spread to one or both lungs. Walking pneumonia, often caused by the mycoplasma pneumonia bacteria, is a less severe type of pneumonia not usually requiring hospitalization or bed rest.

Treatment for pneumonia depends on the cause and severity of symptoms, and therefore ranges from antibiotic to antifungal medication. Mild cases can be treated at home, but more severe cases may require hospitalization. It's a good idea for you to see a health care provider if you are experiencing symptoms, especially difficulty breathing. If, in addition, you are suffering from an underlying health condition, or are taking medicines that suppress your immune system, it is encouraged that you seek health care sooner rather than later.

Hoping you are less flu-ish soon-ish.

Alice!

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