

Script – Print – Don't Sleep On Pneumonia

Celebrity Nick Cannon latest to be diagnosed with lung infection

Nick Cannon is a busy man.

The comedian, TV host and rapper, is also a father of 11, a lupus survivor and now he's battling another illness. Cannon recently posted on social media he was hospitalized with pneumonia.

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs that can cause mild to severe illness in people of all ages. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), viruses, bacteria, and fungi can all cause pneumonia.

In the United States, common causes of viral pneumonia are:

- Influenza viruses
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
- SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19)

“COVID is kind of a wild card,” says BreAnne Gendron, an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN), for OSF HealthCare. “It does create symptoms of shortness of breath. People can have fevers, it is a viral illness. It’s seven to 10 days where people will have a day where they start feeling better. If you have shortness of breath, no matter what your diagnosis is, you want to seek treatment. The concern with COVID isn’t so much pneumonia as blood clots in your lungs causing shortness of breath. We would want to make sure that you're safe in regards to that side of it.”

Most of the people affected by pneumonia in the United States are adults. CDC data shows more than 47,000 people died from pneumonia in 2020.

“Pneumonia is an infection that gets the travels through your lungs for one reason or another,” says Gendron. “Whether you are prone to infection because your immune system is suppressed. Smokers are more prone to pneumonia, people with COPD or asthma or other lung conditions. If you work in a place where there's lots of people in one place, you're more likely to be sick and that can lead to pneumonia.”

Symptoms of pneumonia include high fever, fatigue, chills, cough, chest pain, shortness of breath and headache. Walking pneumonia is a nonmedical term which refers to a milder case of pneumonia.

“If you have a fever greater than 101, or if you are a person that has any of those high risk factors, you have COPD, you’re immune compromised, any of these things that would make you higher risk for pneumonia, and you should seek treatment,” says Gendron. “It’s better to be safe than sorry; it's easier to treat you when you're less ill than when you're struggling to breathe and we have to send you to the emergency room.”

Gendron says people who have pneumonia are prone to getting it again. Treatment options include antibiotics for bacterial pneumonia and rest and fluids are in order for viral pneumonia.

The CDC recommends children younger than age five and adults 65 and older get the pneumococcal vaccine, along with children and adults who are at a higher risk due to other health conditions.

“Your health care provider may recommend that you get the pneumonia vaccine younger than 65, but everybody over the age of 65 should have a pneumonia vaccine because that’s when people are at high risk for developing it,” says Gendron. “As we age our immune systems are generally less effective than they were when we were young. So it’s good to get the vaccine after 65.”

Gendron offers other tips to help stay healthy this winter – avoid people who are sick, wash your hands often, quit smoking and manage conditions like diabetes, asthma and heart disease.

“When you’re wondering if it’s pneumonia or walking pneumonia, it doesn’t really matter which one it is,” she adds. “You need to go by your symptoms and if you’re having high fevers, shortness of breath, you’re coughing so much you can’t sleep at night that you feel like you need help. You should be seen so that we can make sure you’re safe.”

For more information on pneumonia, visit [OSF HealthCare](#).