

NURSE'S NEWSLETTER

TODAY'S TOPIC

WALKING PNEUMONIA

What is Walking Pneumonia?

Walking pneumonia is a mild infection of the respiratory system that allows people, especially children, to go about their daily activities despite being ill. Walking pneumonia is often caused by bacteria called *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, but other bacteria or viruses can also cause it. Unlike other forms of pneumonia, walking pneumonia typically causes mild symptoms. Children with walking pneumonia often feel well enough to go about their normal activities, even though they are sick. "Because this type of pneumonia typically causes milder symptoms, it may go undiagnosed for a while, especially if the child is able to participate in normal activities and isn't as visibly sick as he or she would be with other forms of pneumonia. And that's why it's called walking pneumonia," Dr. Cameron, a Yale medicine pediatrician, explains.

Symptoms to Look For:

Symptoms of walking pneumonia can be subtle and often develop gradually over a few days.

Common signs in children include:

- Persistent dry cough
- Low-grade fever (usually mild but can be higher)
- Sore throat
- Fatigue or general weakness
- Headache
- Ear pain (in some cases)
- Mild shortness of breath or wheezing



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Treatment Options:

Most cases of walking pneumonia are mild and manageable at home. Here's what parents need to know:

- Rest and Hydration: Encourage plenty of rest and fluids, which help clear mucus and soothe the throat.
- Medications: Your child's doctor may prescribe antibiotics, such as Azithromycin, if a bacterial infection is confirmed. Over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen or ibuprofen can help reduce fever and alleviate symptoms. Avoid giving cough suppressants unless recommended by a healthcare provider, as coughing helps clear respiratory passages.

How Parents Can Help:

Supporting your child's recovery from walking pneumonia includes these helpful steps:

- Encourage Rest: Provide a slow-paced schedule and allow time for naps, even if your child feels well enough to be active.
- Promote Good Hygiene: Teach your child to cover their mouth when coughing, wash hands frequently, and avoid close contact with others until symptoms improve.
- Offer Nutritious Foods: A balanced diet can help boost immunity and support faster healing.
- Limit Physical Activity: Avoid strenuous activities until they are fully recovered to prevent prolonged symptoms.

Walking pneumonia is contagious, so remind children of the importance of hygiene:

- Handwashing: Frequent handwashing is one of the best defenses.
- Avoid Sharing Personal Items: Keep drinking cups and utensils separate to prevent the spread of germs.

