

World Pneumonia Day is November 12

In an effort to raise awareness about pneumonia, the third annual World Pneumonia Day is being promoted by a group of approximately 120 health, humanitarian, advocacy, faith-based, government and other organizations. You may be surprised to learn that worldwide, pneumonia kills more children each year than any other illness. One child dies **every 20 seconds** from this disease. But the impact of this disease isn't limited to the developing world. In 2009, 50,774 deaths in the United States were attributed to pneumonia, 210 of those were infants¹.

Pneumonia is defined as an inflammation of the lungs caused by either bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites. Pneumonia is a particular concern if you're older than 65, or have a chronic illness or weak immune system, although it can also occur in young people who are otherwise healthy. ²

The good news is that Pneumonia can be prevented by vaccination. Morbidity and mortality attributed to pneumonia can be reduced by vaccinating with the pneumococcus, yearly influenza, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), and measles vaccines.

The American Lung Association provides a list of easy steps to prevent pneumonia including³:

- Get a **flu shot** every year (the flu is a common cause of pneumonia)
- **Get vaccinated against pneumococcal pneumonia** if you are at high risk
 - People at high risk include:
 - Individuals suffering from a chronic illness
 - Individuals recovering from a severe illness
 - Individuals residing in shared living facilities such as nursing homes
 - Everyone 65 years old or older
- Wash your hands frequently
- Don't smoke

For more information about pneumonia and the vaccines that can help prevent it please talk to your health care provider.

Help raise awareness about pneumonia by sharing this link or a link to the World Pneumonia day website: <http://worldpneumoniaday.org/> on your own blog or Facebook page.

¹ http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr59/nvsr59_04.pdf

² <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/pneumonia/DS00135>

³ <http://www.lungusa.org/lung-disease/pneumonia/prevent-pneumonia.html>