

# Signs and Symptoms of Pneumonia

By Amy Bentley



**Dr. Antonio Arrieta**  
CHOC Pediatric Infectious  
Disease Specialist

Dr. Arrieta is the Director of Pediatric Infectious Diseases and the Director of Infectious Disease Clinical Research at CHOC Children's. He specializes in infectious diseases, including pediatric HIV. A native of Peru, Dr. Arrieta completed his fellowship at UCI-Memorial/Miller Children's Hospital in Long Beach and his residency at Southern Illinois University in Springfield. He joined the CHOC staff in 1991.

Dr. Arrieta's philosophy of care: "My philosophy of care is one that is shared by everyone at CHOC, and that is one of service. We are here to serve the children of Orange County regardless of their backgrounds. We help people stay healthy or we help them return to health."

**EDUCATION:**  
Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia  
in Lima, Peru

**BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:**  
Pediatric Infectious Disease

50,000

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF ANNUAL DEATHS FROM PNEUMONIA IN THE UNITED STATES

## WHAT IS PNEUMONIA?

Pneumonia is an inflammation of the lungs caused by bacteria or viruses, says Dr. Arrieta, CHOC's Pediatric Infectious Disease Specialist. There are many kinds of pneumonia. Bacterial pneumonia is often a complication of a pre-existing condition. In addition, "Pneumonia is often viral in origin, particularly with babies and children under the age of two. Other viruses like RSV and the flu can cause pneumonia," says Dr. Arrieta. The patient's chest can fill with fluid and this can lead to complications like compressed lungs and difficulty breathing, he adds.



## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

"Symptoms include fever and cough, and in the very young, those may be the only symptoms. In older children, particularly those older than six months, you will notice their respiratory rates go up because they need to oxygenate their blood so they breathe more often. There can be chest pain. If it is bacterial in origin, the fever can be higher," says Dr. Arrieta. A case of the flu should go away in three to five days but bacterial pneumonia can last much longer, Dr. Arrieta says.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

Certain groups of people are more at risk, says Dr. Arrieta. Children younger than five years of age are at risk for bacterial pneumonia. "After five the risk drops substantially," he says. Children under one or adults over 65 are at greater risk for complications of pneumonia resulting from the flu. Kids and adults with underlying medical conditions or chronic illnesses like asthma, diabetes or heart disease also face a higher risk.

Over 1 million

NUMBER OF CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN AGE 5 GLOBALLY WHO DIE FROM PNEUMONIA EACH YEAR



1 million

NUMBER OF PEOPLE HOSPITALIZED EACH YEAR WITH PNEUMONIA IN THE UNITED STATES



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