

# Preventing Hospital Acquired Pneumonia

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## **What is hospital acquired pneumonia (HAP)?**

**Hospital acquired pneumonia (HAP)** is an infection of the lungs that you can get when you are in the hospital. Bacteria, viruses, and many other germs can cause pneumonia if they enter your lungs.

## **What are the risks of having HAP?**

HAP is the second most common hospital acquired infection. It can be a life-threatening illness. In serious cases, HAP may:

- Increase your chance of death by 70%
- Increase your length of stay in the hospital
- Require a stay in the intensive care unit (ICU)

## **What are the symptoms of HAP?**

Symptoms include a cough, fever, and trouble breathing. You may also feel very tired. Symptoms can start 2 or more days after you are in the hospital.

## **What does Michigan Medicine do to prevent hospital acquired pneumonia among patients?**

To prevent hospital acquired pneumonia, members of your healthcare team will:

- Keep the head of your bed raised unless your condition does not allow for this
- Clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after entering your room

- Clean your mouth on a regular basis
- Sanitize or replace equipment between patient use

### **What can I do to prevent pneumonia?**

- Read your COMMIT flyer after your surgery.
- Keep the head of your bed elevated.
- Use your **incentive spirometer** (a device that helps expand your lungs by helping you breathe more deeply and fully) **10 times every hour** while you are awake. For example, if you like watching TV, you should be using your incentive spirometer 2-3 times during each commercial break.
- Get out of bed at least **4 times per day**. This includes eating in your chair, standing up, and walking in your room or the hallways.
  - If you are unable to walk, there are still things you can do to prevent pneumonia. Sit up in a chair during meals, change your position often, and do simple exercises in bed.
  - Patients who do not get out of bed have a harder time clearing their airways and decrease their ability to move independently.
- Brush your teeth and rinse your mouth **2 times per day**.
  - Patients who have poor oral hygiene are more likely to get HAP.
  - If you inhale germs in the air, they can travel to your lungs. Brushing your teeth helps prevent these germs from getting to your lungs.
- Wash your hands frequently or use the hand sanitizer or Super Sani-Cloth® wipes that we provide. Hand hygiene is very important to decrease the risk of infection.

### **How can my family and friends help prevent HAP?**

Family, friends, and visitors can do the following to help reduce your risk for HAP:

- **Clean their hands.** We encourage all visitors to wash their hands each time they enter or leave your room.
- **Speak up.** If your friends, family members, or visitors notice steps **not** being taken to help prevent pneumonia, we want them to speak up.
- **Partner with us.** Friends, family, and visitors can partner with the healthcare team to ensure oral care, head of bed elevation, and activity goals are being consistently met.

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