

Pneumocystis Jiroveci Pneumonia (PJP)

What is it?

Pneumocystis pneumonia (PJP), is a lung (breathing) infection caused by the fungus; pneumocystis jiroveci. The fungus is common in the environment and does not cause illness in healthy people.

Who is at risk?

PJP is one of the most frequent and opportunistic infections that affect people with weakened immune systems, meaning that their bodies don't fight infections well. People who are at risk are persons with HIV/AIDS, those getting cancer treatments, corticosteroids or immunomodulating agents or an organ transplant recipient. PJP is extremely rare in healthy individuals.

What are possible signs and symptoms of PJP?

- Dry cough
- Fever
- Difficulty breathing
- Generalized weakness
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Weight loss

You must see your doctor if any of these signs occur.

How is it spread?

P. jirovecii is present in exhaled air close to patients with PJP. Direct person to person spread has been documented, and some strains may be easier to spread than others. Patients hospitalized with PJP are placed in single rooms. Some healthy adults can carry the Pneumocystis fungus in their lungs without having symptoms, this is known as a carrier state. It can spread to other people, including those with weakened immune systems.

Is there treatment for it?

PJP requires treatment with antibiotics. The usual form of treatment is trimethoprim sulfamethoxazole which is also known by the brand names Bactrim, Septra and Cotrim. This medicine is given in pill form or by intravenous (IV). This treatment can cause some side effects such as a rash or nausea but the benefits of treating usually outweigh the risks of these side effects. Without treatment, PJP can be fatal.

For more information visit:

CDC Centres for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/pneumocystis-pneumonia/>

Adherence to Infection Prevention and Control measures by staff and visitors is required to prevent the spread of infection.

Stop the spread of germs and infection. Clean your hands.	
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This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject. If you have any further questions, ask Infection Prevention & Control or your health care provider.