

Nurse's Notes: The disease of the month is: PNEUMONIA. There are different types of pneumonia: viral, bacterial, aspiration, and walking. We have seen several cases of pneumonia this winter at school. Most have been "walking pneumonia" which is a type of pneumonia with less severe symptoms. Although fever is normally present with pneumonia, at school many of our affected students have not had fever. Other symptoms of pneumonia may include: coughing, malaise, decreased appetite, chills, fast and/or shallow breathing, and fatigue. Symptoms often start during or after a cold or the flu.

Diagnosis is usually made using medical history and exam by a physician (using a stethoscope, the lungs sound congested and wheezing may be present). A chest x-ray is frequently ordered for diagnosis. Treatment may include: antibiotics (only if it is caused by bacteria), steroids, expectorants, inhalers, and rest.

Pneumonia is transmitted through air droplets, or from bacteria from your own nose and throat. Viral pneumonia is usually less severe than bacterial. In healthy people, pneumonia can be a mild illness that is hardly noticed and clears up in 2 to 3 weeks. It requires hospitalization when it is severe, if the patient is very young or elderly, or if the patient has an impaired immune system. To prevent the spread of this disease at school, please educate your children about "covering their cough."