



Mycoplasma Infection

What is mycoplasma infection?

Mycoplasma infection is caused by a germ called *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*. It is a common illness that can cause an upper respiratory infection (such as a cold) or mild form of pneumonia, sometimes called “walking pneumonia.”

Who gets mycoplasma infection?

Anyone can get the illness, but it is more common in older children and young adults. It is the leading cause of pneumonia in school age children and young adults.

What are the symptoms of mycoplasma infection?

The symptoms include a dry cough, sore throat, fever, headache and tiredness. These symptoms typically occur 14 to 21 days after exposure.

How do I find out if I have a mycoplasma infection?

A healthcare provider will often diagnosis mycoplasma infection based on typical symptoms experienced in an older child or young adult. If necessary, a healthcare provider can do laboratory tests including a blood test or sputum test (a test done on the mucus that you cough from deep inside the lungs), although these tests are not always accurate.

How is mycoplasma infection spread?

The germs that cause mycoplasma infection live in the nose and throat and are sprayed into the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs. People nearby can then breathe in these germs which settle in the lungs. A person can get mycoplasma infection more than once.

What is the treatment for mycoplasma infection?

In most cases medicine is not needed for an upper respiratory tract infection; symptoms go away on their own. If you have pneumonia, your healthcare provider may give you an antibiotic to kill the germs causing the infection. It is important to seek medical care if your symptoms continue, you have problems breathing or you have any other unusual concerns.

How to prevent mycoplasma infection?

There are many way to help prevent the spread of germs:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze. Throw the used tissue in a waste basket.
- After coughing or sneezing, always clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Stay away from people who are sick.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items, especially with people who are ill.

**For more information, please contact
Boston Public Health Commission, Communicable Disease Control
(617) 534-5611 or www.bphc.org**