

ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS (ARI): MESSAGES

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About the Message Library

People affected by disaster must have access to timely, appropriate and accurate information to help them keep themselves and their families safe and well. They should know their rights, entitlements and be able to give feedback. Responders have a duty to put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms to ensure this.

Our Message Library offers clear, concise and simple messages on a range of topics as templates for you to adapt and use in the context you are working in. These are intended to help you make a quick start on communicating with communities while you further develop mechanisms for on-going dialogue with diverse groups within each community.

For help contextualising and using the messages we recommend you do our e-learning course and read the following technical guidance.

E-learning

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=768>

Guidance

<https://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-guidance/cdac-message-library-user-guidance>

What is an ARI?

Pneumonia (an ARI) is an infection of one or both lungs which is usually caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites. The lungs are made of small sacs which fill with air when a healthy person breathes. When someone has pneumonia, these sacs fill with fluid and harmful substances which make breathing painful and difficult.

Symptoms of ARIs

The symptoms of pneumonia in children include rapid or difficult breathing, cough, sharp chest pain, fever, chills, headaches, loss of appetite and wheezing. Children under five with severe cases of pneumonia may struggle to breathe, with their chests moving in or retracting during inhalation. Sometimes, children and babies who develop pneumonia do not have any specific signs of a chest infection but develop a fever, appear quite ill, and can become lethargic.

Transmission of ARIs

Pneumonia can be spread in a number of ways. Harmful things such as viruses or bacteria that are commonly found in a child's nose or throat can infect the lungs if they are inhaled. They may also spread via air-borne droplets from a cough or sneeze. Pneumonia may also spread through blood, especially during and shortly after birth.

The importance of seeking treatment and where to go

Pneumonia is a dangerous disease, especially for young children. If you think you or your child has pneumonia, visit a health facility so they can receive treatment as soon as possible. Your nearest facility is at [insert info]. Opening times are [insert info].

Advice on home-based care for pneumonia

If you think your child/ a person in your family has pneumonia, and you can't get to a health facility, ensure they are fed well, given lots of fluids and bathed with cool but not cold water. Children who are 6 months or older should be encouraged to breastfeed and eat and drink frequently.

Treatment procedure for ARIs

Pneumonia can be treated with medicine called antibiotics. If you have been given antibiotics by a trained health worker, ensure that you take all the medicine that you have been given, even if you/the patient is feeling better. If not, you may get sick again.

How to prevent ARIs

Prevent pneumonia by making sure babies are exclusively breastfed for the first six months and that all children are well nourished and fully immunised. You can find out about the recommended vaccines for your children by contacting your nearest health facility. Smoking while you are pregnant or being exposed to smoke is bad for you and your baby's health. Babies especially should be kept out of smoky kitchens and away from cooking fires.

REFERENCES

For more information on this topic, we recommend you read the following references.

World Health Organization. Programme of Acute Respiratory Infections. (1990). **Acute respiratory infections.**
<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/61939>

Centers for Disease Control (2019). **How to Prevent the Spread of Respiratory Illnesses in Disaster Evacuation Centers.**
<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/respiratoryic.html>

HELP US KEEP THE LIBRARY UP TO DATE

If you would like to contribute to topic reviews, have found a message that needs greater clarity, or wish to create a new topic, please contact us at info@cdacnetwork.org.