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by Bonnie Fuller

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Whoopi Goldberg said she nearly 'left this earth' after contracting a nasty case of pneumonia. The infection is no joke, and a medical professional EXCLUSIVELY tells us what causes it, how to treat it and more.

"I an okay. I am not dead," [Whoopi Goldberg](#), 63, said during a video message on the March 8 episode of *The View*. During the [health update](#), she revealed she had come down with pneumonia and the infection had become septic. "I came very, very close to leaving the Earth. Good news, I didn't. "Thank you for all of your good wishes. All of the wonderful things that people have

been saying.” This message was the first time Whoopi had been seen on *The View* since Feb. 6, and many fans were left worried and confused.

For those who are still wondering why Whoopi is still recovering a month after she got sick, **Dr. Reed Wilson, MD, EXCLUSIVELY** spoke with **HollywoodLife.com** about all the need-to-know details about Pneumonia.

1. Pneumonia is a respiratory infection. “Pneumonia is simply an infection of the lungs,” Dr. Wilson tells **HollywoodLife.com**. “The lungs, when looked at under the microscope, are little sacs where the air you breathe in is exchanged with the used gases the body is trying to get rid of. With pneumonia, these sacs get filled with infected fluid. It is, therefore, harder to exchange oxygen and other gases.”

“Unfortunately, some of the symptoms of pneumonia can be the same as a cold or bronchitis (infection of the bronchial tubes). This includes cough, sputum production, fever, and fatigue, sometimes these are worse with pneumonia,” says Dr. Wilson.” But if pneumonia gets even worse you could have shortness of breath or confusion. When the bacteria from the lungs enters the bloodstream it can spread throughout the body, this is called sepsis. The bacteria can spread to other organs or it can release toxins which can be very dangerous lowering the blood pressure.”

The whole list of symptoms, according to the [Mayo Clinic](#), may include: coughing; fatigue; chest pain when you breathe or cough; fever, sweating and shaking chills, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea; shortness of breath; lower than normal body temperature in adults 65 years or older (or with people who have weak immune systems); and confusion or changes in mental awareness in adults ages 65 and older.

As Whoopi Goldberg said when giving her health update, [it can be fatal](#). About 50,000 people die each year from Pneumonia, according to the [CDC](#). “The individuals at greatest risk are the very young, the old and anyone with compromised immunity,” says Dr. Wilson. Vaccines and other preventative measures – washing your hands, covering your mouth when you cough, keeping frequently contacted surfaces germ-free – can help.

2. It can be caused by a wide variety of bacteria, viruses, and fungi. There are many ways a person can come down with pneumonia. “The most common types of pneumonia are bacterial and viral,” Dr. Wilson tells **HollywoodLife.com**, “but there are other types such as fungal, chemical and aspiration. Bacterial pneumonia is usually very susceptible to antibiotics. As you know, antibiotics only work against bacteria. We have some anti-viral agents, so we treat those susceptible to these agents with anti-virals. Many viruses, though, need to heal on their own.”

The most common type of bacterial pneumonia is called pneumococcal pneumonia, according to the [American Lung Association](#). Pneumococcal pneumonia is caused by the *Streptococcus pneumoniae* germ and infects over 900,000 Americans every year. In addition to that, there are two “atypical” bacterial pneumonia (“atypical” because of their symptoms, not because they’re uncommon):

- *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, a “tiny wide-spread bacterium that usually infects people younger than 40 years old,” per the American Lung Association. This hits those living and working in crowded conditions, and is sometimes referred to as “Walking pneumonia.”
- *Chlamydomphila pneumoniae*, which causes upper respiratory infections year-round but can result in a mild form of pneumonia.
- *Legionella pneumophila*, which causes a dangerous form of pneumonia called Legionnaire’s disease. *Legionella* has been linked to exposure to contaminated water sources, like cooling towers, whirlpool spas, and outdoor water fountains.

In addition to those bacteria, the influenza virus, and Respiratory syncytial virus can cause pneumonia. Pneumocystis pneumonia is a fungal infection that occurs in people who have weak immune systems due to HIV/Aids or the long-term use of medicines that suppress their immune systems.

3. There are types of pneumonia based on where you caught it. “Hospital-acquired pneumonia” or HAP is a type of pneumonia acquired in hospitals and might be more resistant to antibiotics. “Community-acquired pneumonia” is a type acquired outside a medical or institutional setting. Knowing *where* someone contracts the infection might help a doctor better determine how to treat it.

4. Treatment and recovery vary from person to person. Where you got sick and the type of pneumonia will determine your treatment plan. Bacterial pneumonia will be treated with an antibiotic. Viral pneumonia may be treated with antiviral medication, but the American Lung Association says that symptom management and rest are needed.

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Control your fever
- Get lots of rest

“We give people at risk of getting pneumonia vaccines,” Dr. Wilson tells **HollywoodLife.com**. “This includes adults who are older than 65, those with chronic illnesses, conditions which weaken the immune system and smokers. This will not totally prevent you from getting pneumonia but will help.”

5. Recovery may take a lot of time. There’s a reason why Whoopi Goldberg took more than a month off from *The View*. “Some people feel better and are able to return to their normal routines within a week. For other people, it can take a month or more. Most people continue to feel tired for about a month,” the American Lung Association says.

“In the end, most of us weather the pneumonia storm well with help of antibiotics if it is bacterial, possibly anti-virals if it is viral or self-healing,” Dr. Wilson tells **HollywoodLife.com**. “The human body is an amazing machine. But the few times it turns for the worse, it can be catastrophic.”

So, don’t rush back to work. Take time to get back to 100%.