

PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

Pneumonia: How OMT Can Help

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Most patients who develop pneumonia will present with symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, weakness and/or fatigue, possible fever or chills, or even a rapid heart rate. Patients may also notice that they have pain when taking a deep breath. Typically, a chest x-ray can help confirm the diagnosis of pneumonia in the presence of classic signs/symptoms and physical exam findings (fever and egophony). Most people will be treated with antibiotics by mouth and subsequently recover. However, in some circumstances, if the infection is or becomes severe, inpatient treatment may be necessary for additional support.

HOW CAN OMT HELP WITH PNEUMONIA?

Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) is a set of hands-on therapeutic techniques used by osteopathic physicians that help diagnose and treat many different types of medical conditions. Many techniques are aimed at encouraging healing via the body's inherent mechanisms of self-regulation. As such, OMT can be used as a complement to many of the traditional treatments.

SPECIFIC OMT TECHNIQUES THAT MAY HELP WITH PNEUMONIA INCLUDE:

Soft Tissue Techniques

These techniques are simply gentle (static or rhythmic) pressure applied to three different regions—neck, upper/mid-back and mid-lower back—along the muscles immediately adjacent to your spine on each side.

Lymphatic Pump Techniques

These techniques help enhance the flow of a fluid called lymphatic fluid in the body. While you are lying on your back, your physician will gently apply a pulsating, rhythmic push on the ball of each foot that helps enhance lymphatic fluid flow throughout the body. Similarly, your physician may also apply a gentle, rhythmic push on the upper chest wall near your collarbones using both of their hands.

Myofascial Release Techniques

These techniques help by allowing lymphatic fluid to drain appropriately in the body. Your physician will engage and hold tissues in specific positions along your upper chest wall/lower neck to help alleviate tension in that specific region.

WHERE CAN YOU GET OMT?

You will need to locate a physician who performs OMT. Doctors of osteopathic medicine are physicians who attended four years of medical school and have additional training to perform OMT.

SOURCE(S): *American Family Physician; The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association; Osteopathic Considerations in Systemic Dysfunction*

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