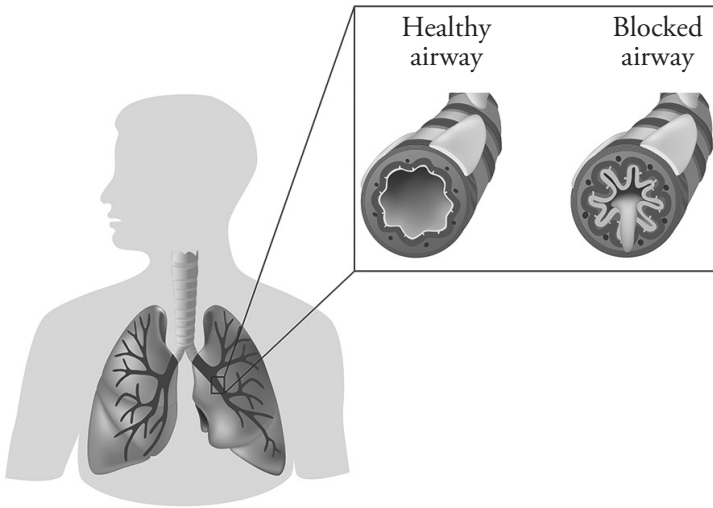# Pneumonitis

What is pneumonitis?

When your lungs are irritated, the passages that air goes through when you breathe can swell partly closed. This is called pneumonitis (*new-mo-night-is*). It can make breathing hard, cause coughing, and make you feel weak.

Healthy airway   Blocked airway

Here are some possible causes for pneumonitis:

- Infection such as pneumonia
- Radiation therapy
- Bad reaction to medicine
- Breathing in harmful things
  - Chlorine fumes
  - Mercury fumes
  - Some kinds of mushroom spores
  - Some other chemicals
  - Tobacco smoke

What are the signs?

These are signs of pneumonitis:

- Cough
- Feeling weak and uncomfortable
- Chest tightness
- Shortness of breath
- Fast, shallow breathing
- Feeling very tired
- Headache
- Weight loss

Many other things can cause these signs. If you have any of them for more than 2 weeks, call your doctor. Long-lasting pneumonitis can cause permanent lung damage.

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor can check for pneumonitis with some tests:

- Blood test
- Chest x-ray
- Chest CT scan
- Lung function tests

How is it treated?

Your doctor can give you medicines to help you feel better.