Pneumonia strikes more than 26 million Americans, 8.6 million of whom are under age 18. Although preventable with good handwashing and immunization, 62 Ottawa county adults died of pneumonia and flu in 1999 - mostly those age 75 and older. Bacterial pneumonia can be found in the throats of up to half of parents and children and 5-25% of them have no symptoms.

1999 Pneumonia & Influenza Stats:
- In Michigan, death rates are highest for infants and those age 75 and older, rising steeply after age 45.
- In Ottawa County, pneumonia and influenza rank 4th as cause of death in females and 6th for males.
- Bacterial pneumonia causes 10-15% of deaths, ranking 1st as cause of preventable hospitalization in O.C.
- While pneumococcal pneumonia is most common, 30-40% of deaths in Ottawa County are due to hospital-acquired staph pneumonia
- Chlamydial pneumonia, most prevalent in teens, reaches a plateau of 50% of cases by age 20 to 30.
- In 6 out of the 11 flu epidemics, 80-90% of deaths occurred to those over age 65.

Those at High Risk include:
- infants, especially premature babies
- seniors age 50 and older
- chronically ill (diabetes, heart, lung or kidney disease)
- caregivers of sick elderly or chronically ill
- those living with at-risk chronically ill

*Each year in the U.S., pneumococcal infection causes:
- 500,000 cases of pneumonia
- 50,000 cases of bacteremia (blood poisoning)
- 3,000 cases of meningitis
- 7 million cases of otitis media (ear infection)

NOTE: Before 1999, deaths were classified with ICD-9 codes 480-487. Revised codes (ICD-10) are used from 1999 on and the comparability ratio is .7 for the change for pneumonia/flu data. Rates are higher than they appear on the chart (comparison undervalues the 1999-2000 rates).