Invasive Pneumococcal Disease

What is Invasive Pneumococcal Disease (IPD)?

Pneumococcal disease is caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. It can cause many types of illnesses including ear, sinus and lung infections (pneumonia).

When this bacteria gets into the blood stream or the central nervous system (meningitis) it is called invasive pneumococcal disease. Invasive disease means that germs invade parts of the body that are normally free from germs. This form of infection tends to be more serious.

How is IPD spread?

The bacteria can often be found in the nose and throat of healthy individuals, especially in young children. It is spread from person-to-person by direct contact with nasal or oral secretions, like saliva or mucus. The bacteria can also be spread through contact with items contaminated with nasal or oral secretions from an infected person.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually start one to three days after being exposed to the bacteria. Symptoms of pneumococcal disease are not specific and depend on the site of infection.

Symptoms of invasive pneumococcal disease can include joint pain, fever, difficulty breathing, cough, stiff neck, confusion, and/or sensitivity to light.

How do I know if I have IPD?

It is important to be aware of the symptoms of invasive pneumococcal disease. If you develop symptoms, there are different tests that your health care provider can order to test for the bacteria.. Sometimes your blood or cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) will be tested.

What is the treatment for IPD?

People diagnosed with invasive pneumococcal disease are often hospitalized and usually recover with antibiotic treatment.

How do I protect myself and others?

The best way to prevent this disease is vaccination; especially for young children, seniors, and if you have a high risk medical condition.

Presently, there are two types of pneumococcal vaccines available. Both are publicly funded depending on age and risk factors.

Avoid sharing anything that has come in contact with someone else's mouth. Cover your mouth or nose when coughing or sneezing, throw away any used tissues and wash your hands.

It is also recommended to get your vaccination against influenza each year because bacterial pneumonia is a common complication of influenza.

Speak to your health care provider about your immunization status. If you do not have a health care provider, call the Vaccine Preventable Disease Team at the health unit for more information 705-721-7520 ext. 8806.

For more information call the Communicable Disease Team: ext. 8809

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