

PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF MENINGITIS IN AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS.

YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE SYMPTOMS OF PNEUMOCOCCAL MENINGITIS.



Fits



High-pitched crying in babies and children



Fever



Bulging fontanelle in babies



Vomiting



Joint and/or muscle pain



Irritability



Headache



Dislike of bright lights



Stiff neck (not always with young children)



Drowsiness, confusion, loss of consciousness

THESE SYMPTOMS CAN LOOK LIKE THE FLU AND NOT ALL SYMPTOMS MAY BE PRESENT.

BUT REMEMBER, MENINGITIS REQUIRES URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION.

PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE FACTS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.

Further information about meningitis is available from such groups as The Meningitis Centre on 1800 250 223 or www.meningitis.com.au

Wyeth

Wyeth Australia, Baulkham Hills.
ABN 16 000 296 211 . W20050098
Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare HWP090



FREE Australian Government Pneumococcal Vaccination Program for eligible children.

WHAT IS PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE?

Pneumococcal (pronounced new-mo-cockle) disease describes a group of illnesses caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus (S.) pneumoniae*, also known as pneumococcus.

It is a serious infection that occurs most commonly in children, particularly those under 2 years of age.

The pneumococcus bug can cause meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain), pneumonia (infection of the lung), septicaemia (blood infection), as well as otitis media (infection in the middle ear).

HOW SERIOUS IS PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE?

Pneumococcal disease can be very serious. It may cause permanent hearing loss, brain damage and death.

Pneumococcal disease can impact the quality of life for a child and the entire family. Just think of the time that is spent nursing an ill child; the trips to the doctor, absence from work, even getting a young child to take medication can be time consuming. If the child requires hospitalisation the burden and the worry can be even greater.

HOW DO CHILDREN CATCH PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE?

The pneumococcal bug is carried in the nose and throat of healthy adults and children.

It can be passed from one child to another in droplets that are released into the air by sneezing and coughing.

Most children become carriers at some time or other – but not all will become sick.

Pneumococcal disease is more common in young children than adults because young children lack the right type of antibodies to fight the bacteria.

HOW DO YOU TREAT AND PREVENT PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE?

Meningitis and septicaemia can develop very quickly so it is vital that treatment is provided without delay.

Antibiotics are used to treat these diseases and are effective in most cases if started in time.

However, a small number of bacteria are resistant to some antibiotics, which results in longer periods in hospital with greater cost.

THE BENEFITS OF VACCINATION AGAINST PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE.

Vaccination can help prevent the disease as well as reduce the spread of the bacteria to other children. Vaccination may also reduce antibiotic resistance.

The Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule (ASVS) recommends vaccination against pneumococcal disease for all infants.

Vaccination is expected to protect against 80-85% of cases of serious pneumococcal disease in urban Australian children.

Commonly reported side effects of vaccination include fever and redness or swelling at the site of injection.

The Australian Government is providing FREE vaccine for all newborns at 2, 4 and 6 months of age.

To find out more, speak to your local doctor or healthcare professional on your very next visit.

**THE PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINATION PROGRAM
– HELPING TO PROTECT THE SPARK OF LIFE.**

