

Fact Sheet

Invasive Pneumococcal Disease (IPD)

What is Invasive Pneumococcal Disease (IPD)?

IPD is an illness caused by bacteria. The symptoms of IPD are often mild, however IPD can cause serious infections; Areas of the body that can be affected include:

- Inflammation of the lungs referred to as pneumonia;
- Infection of the blood referred to as bacteremia; and
- Infection of the lining that is around the brain referred to as meningitis.

If IPD is not treated it can lead to permanent disability or death.

How is it spread?

IPD is spread when an infected person sneezes or coughs. Children can carry the bacteria in their nose and throat and spread the bacteria without being sick.

Who is at risk?

Anyone can get IPD. Individuals at a higher risk level of getting the disease include:

- People aged 65 years and older.
- Children less than 2 years of age.
- People with medical problems such as heart, lung, liver or kidney disease, alcoholism, diabetes, HIV infection, and those whose immune systems have been weakened due to medical conditions or treatment.

What are the symptoms of IPD?

Symptoms depend on the part of the body that is infected.

Pneumonia is the most common serious form of the illness. Symptoms may include:

- fever,
- difficulty breathing or rapid breathing,
- cough
- chest pain.

Meningitis symptoms may include:

- fever,
- stiff neck,
- headache
- pain when looking into bright lights.

In babies, meningitis may cause poor eating and drinking, vomiting and a lower level of alertness.

What is the treatment?

Antibiotics can be used to treat IPD, however the infection is resistant to some of these drugs. Your health care provider will decide which antibiotic is best to treat the disease and it is important to take the medication as directed and for the entire course of treatment.

How can IPD be prevented?

To reduce the risk of becoming infected with IPD:

- There is a safe and effective vaccine available to prevent most types of pneumococcal infections. People who are at higher risk for IPD (see above) should talk to their health care provider..
- Follow good respiratory hygiene;
 - wash your hands regularly with soap
 - cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow or sleeve.
- Limit your exposure to cigarette smoke.
- Treat any conditions that increase your risk for pneumococcal disease.