

## PNEUMOCOCCAL INFECTION

Pneumococcal infection, due to the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, is not the same bacteria that cause strep throat. Before the routine use of the conjugate pneumococcal vaccine for children, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* was the leading cause of bacterial ear infection. Rates of serious pneumococcal infections in children have decreased markedly since use of the conjugate pneumococcal vaccine began.

### CAUSE

*Streptococcus pneumoniae*, bacteria

### SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of ear infection can include fever, ear pain, pulling at the ear, behavior or appetite change, and sometimes ear redness or drainage. *Streptococcus pneumoniae* can also cause conjunctivitis and sinusitis. More serious pneumococcal infections include lung infection (pneumonia), bloodstream infection (septicemia), and infection of the brain (meningitis).

### SPREAD

Pneumococcal bacteria spread from person-to-person by direct contact with respiratory secretions, like saliva or mucus. Pneumococcal disease is spread through coughing, sneezing, and close contact with an infected person. Many people, especially children, have the bacteria in their nose or throat at one time or another without being ill. This is called "carriage."

### INCUBATION (time from exposure to onset of symptoms)

Varies by type of infection; can be as short as 1 to 3 days

### CONTAGIOUS PERIOD

Unknown; may be as long as the germ is present in respiratory tract secretions, but probably is less than 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins

### EXCLUSION

Child care and School: Until child receives a doctor's note, and is without fever and well enough to participate in routine activities.

### DIAGNOSIS

Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider if their child has a high fever or persistent ear pain.

### TREATMENT

Pneumococcal infections are often treated with antibiotics.

### PREVENTION/CONTROL

- The most effective way to prevent pneumococcal infection is to **get vaccinated**.
- Use antibiotics as recommended by a healthcare professional. Unnecessary antibiotic use or not taking antibiotics as prescribed (not finishing the entire prescription or sharing the antibiotics with others) can contribute to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
- Wash your hands often.

- If soap and water aren't available, clean hands with hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol)
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. If you need to touch your face, make sure your hands are clean.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Try to avoid close contact, such as kissing, hugging, or sharing eating utensils or cups, with people who are sick.

For vaccination information:

<http://isite3/Procedures/PH/PNEUMOCOCCAL%20VACCINE.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/VACCINES/vpd-vac/pneumo/default.htm>

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/cd/>