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The Number One Reason For Your Child'S Doctor Visit

By News Canada

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by: News Canada

(NC)–Infections caused by pneumococcal disease are a leading reason for many children's doctor visits in the first few years of life.

What is Pneumococcal Disease?

Pneumococcal disease is the result of a tiny bacterial organism. Children infected with this bacterium can develop serious illness, which can sometimes even be life threatening. These tiny bacteria cause diseases such as blood infections, bacterial pneumonia and middle ear infections.

One serious infection that you've likely heard of is bacterial meningitis, which causes severe inflammation around the brain and spinal cord. If left untreated, or not treated soon enough, meningitis can result in permanent hearing loss, paralysis or even death. If these bacteria reach the bloodstream they can also cause a serious blood infection. Once the bacterium is in the blood, it can travel to other parts of the body, including the brain, bone tissue, soft tissue or joints.

Pneumococcal disease is a common cause of these illnesses that result in many serious and painful infections, upsetting for the child and parent.

What About Treatment?

These infections are often difficult to diagnose. The symptoms are common and doctors have difficulty determining the problem, often it's too late and the damage is already done. As well, these infections are usually treated with antibiotics. Bacterial resistance to antibiotics has been on the increase in recent years, in both children and adults. Their widespread use has resulted in a decline in their effectiveness and an increase in the need for a second course of treatment for some children. This can lead to a longer recovery time, or worse still, if the child doesn't respond to the second course, the bacteria might simply linger, increasing the likelihood that other children will be infected as well.

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Off to the Doctor's Office Again...

Children under the age of two are frequently ill, prompting many visits to the doctor's office. Cutting down on doctor visits is in both a parent and child's best interest. It is especially frustrating for those families that do not have regular access to a family doctor.

Doctor visits and time spent recuperating from illness can keep children at home, and keep parents away from work. Keeping your child healthy and free of infection by protecting them against illnesses like pneumococcal disease is the best way to avoid frequent visits to the doctor and more prescriptions for antibiotics.

Is My Child at Risk?

Children under five years of age can be at a greater risk for infections caused by pneumococcal disease than older children. Your child may be at greater risk of infection from pneumococcal disease if they fall into any of the groups below. Regularly participating in group activities with other children
Recently had an ear infection
Of African or Native origin
Suffers from chronic diseases
Has a weakened immune system
Attending a pre-school or day care centre

If your child is at risk ask your doctor about ways to protect him or her from pneumococcal disease. Prevnar® is a breakthrough vaccine that protects infants and children aged six weeks to nine years from pneumococcal disease, and can help avoid visits to the doctor and decrease the chance of antibiotic resistance.

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Visiting With The Pediatrician - What To Expect

By Sarah Veda

The Number One Reason For Your Child'S Doctor Visit

In the first year of your baby's life, you will be visiting your pediatrician about every other month, for well check ups and immunizations. Here's a rundown of how those visits go, and approximately how often you'll need to visit.

Two week visit Some doctors schedule a visit earlier than two weeks, but most pediatricians begin at the two week mark. Your baby's weight, length and head circumference will be measured, and you can expect this at every well baby checkup during this first year. They will also do a general exam and check the baby's fontanel. One thing the doctor particularly interested in at this checkup is baby's weight gain. Your baby will typically lose some weight right after birth, so at this checkup the doctor will want to ensure that baby is gaining back the lost weight. They will also ask about eating habits, how often the baby is producing wet and dirty diapers, and about how the baby is sleeping.

One month visit This visit will be largely the same as the previous visit, focusing on baby's development, and on yours and baby's adjustment at home.

Two month visit Baby will be checked again, and immunizations will usually start at the two month mark. The first dose of the DPT - (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis) vaccine is usually administered at this visit. For more information about when immunizations are administered, see the chapter on this subject.

>From this point on, you can expect well baby visits every other month, until your baby is a year old. There will routine physical exams, and questions about your baby's development. For the first year of life, the baby will receive immunizations at nearly every visit. These visits are not only important opportunities for the doctor to check on your baby's progress, but are also opportunities for you to ask questions and gain reassurance about how things are going, so take advantage. For instance, if you are concerned that your child has not reached a development milestone, these visits are a good time to discuss this with your doctor. Your doctor will also be looking for these development milestones, and will alert you if there is an issue. It's helpful to write your questions down as you think of them, so you don't forget.

In addition, be sure to discuss your doctor's preferences on calling when your child is sick. For example, is there a 24 hour on-call nursing service for questions? Or, is the on call only for emergencies. Your relationship with your pediatrician is critical to maintaining your child's health and your peace of mind. Don't hesitate to ask questions, and call on your doctor as often as needed to ensure your comfort.

Sarah is a 41 year old wife and mother of two boys and one girl. She spent many years as a manager in the corporate world, and gave it up to be a stay at home mom. Go to

now and get her incredible baby minicourse - absolutely free.

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