

**Surveillance Alert – *Streptococcus pneumoniae* Serotype 5**

We are sending this alert because there has been an increase in the number of invasive cases of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* serotype 5 reported in western provinces. The majority of these cases have been identified in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton among non-elderly adults. A number of risk factors have been identified and include: homelessness; living in rooming houses/shelters; use of injection drugs or crack cocaine; and underlying medical conditions such as HIV and hepatitis C infection.

In order to facilitate early diagnosis, treatment and reporting, we are requesting health care providers undertake appropriate collection of sterile site specimens for laboratory testing as serotyping is not routinely performed on non-invasive isolates. We also recommend immunization with 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine for high-risk patients.

Routine immunization with the 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine should continue for all persons 65 years of age and older and for persons two years of age and older who are at risk for invasive pneumococcal disease, as outlined by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

*Streptococcus pneumoniae* is the most common cause of community-acquired pneumonia. Prior to 2005, serotype 5 was rarely identified in Canada. Transmission of this bacteria is from person to person through droplets contained in sneezes and coughs, direct oral contact, and by hand contact. Illness among casual contacts and caregivers is infrequent. The most common symptoms of streptococcal pneumonia include cough, fatigue, fever, chills, sweats, and shortness of breath.

In Ontario, this type of pneumonia is reportable. Toronto data for 2006 show no increase in the number of cases of invasive *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, and no cases have been identified as serotype 5.

Toronto Public Health will be meeting with key stakeholders to develop a plan for an outreach vaccination strategy early in January 2007.

**For more information please contact Toronto Health Connection at (416) 338-7600.**