



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Preventing Pneumonia

World Pneumonia Day — November 2, 2009

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Pneumonia is sometimes perceived as a disease that affects the elderly. However, it's one of the leading causes of death among children worldwide. Of the approximately 10 million children under the age of five who die each year, nearly one in five dies from pneumonia.

Dr. Adam Cohen is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. He's joining us today to discuss how to prevent pneumonia in young children. Welcome to the show, Adam.

[Dr. Cohen] Thank you; happy to be here.

[Dr. Gaynes] Adam what causes pneumonia?

[Dr. Cohen] Pneumonia can be caused by many germs. The most common are viruses, bacteria, and sometimes other microbes.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the symptoms of pneumonia?

[Dr. Cohen] Children with pneumonia often have a fever or some other sign of infection. And then, because it's an infection of the lungs, they may have a cough or have difficulty breathing.

[Dr. Gaynes] How is pneumonia treated in young children?

[Dr. Cohen] Once a child is diagnosed with pneumonia, they may need to drink plenty of fluids and get lots of rest. There are also some situations where children may have a more severe pneumonia that's caused by a bacteria, and in those cases, they may need antibiotic treatment.

[Dr. Gaynes] Why are children so susceptible to pneumonia?

[Dr. Cohen] Children have a more naïve immune system. They haven't been exposed to as many microorganisms as adults have and because of that, they may be more susceptible to pneumonia. In addition, many young children haven't gotten all the vaccines that can be used to prevent pneumonia.

[Dr. Gaynes] Adam, tell us about the vaccines to prevent pneumonia?

[Dr. Cohen] There are three main vaccines that can help prevent pneumonia in kids. Those are the pneumococcal vaccine, the Hib vaccine, and the influenza vaccine. There are many other vaccines that are commonly given to children, such as the chicken pox vaccine, the measles vaccine, and the pertussis vaccine that can also prevent pneumonia.

[Dr. Gaynes] Adam, how often and when should children be vaccinated against pneumonia?

[Dr. Cohen] All of these vaccines are available in the routine childhood vaccination schedule that are given to kids in the first few years of life. Although some of them, like the influenza vaccine, need to be given every year.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about preventing pneumonia?

[Dr. Cohen] Listeners can get more information by going to the CDC web page at www.cdc.gov and by selecting “Pneumonia” from “P” in the A-Z list

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks Adam. I’ve been talking today with CDC’s Dr. Adam Cohen about ways to prevent pneumonia in children. Remember parents, keep immunization records for your children and consult your child’s doctor to ensure they’ve been immunized against potentially life-threatening diseases, such as pneumonia.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.