

What is Invasive Pneumococcal Disease?

Invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) is a serious infection caused by the *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria. It can spread from the lungs or sinuses into the bloodstream, brain, or other organs, leading to life-threatening complications such as **Pneumonia** (lung infection), **Bacteremia** (blood infection), and **Meningitis** (brain/spinal cord infection).

Common symptoms of IPD include:

- High fever and chills
- Cough, chest pain, and difficulty breathing
- Confusion or disorientation
- Stiff neck or light sensitivity

The Risk for Welders



Workers exposed to **metal fumes** (e.g., welding, cutting, grinding) breathe in particles that can **damage the lungs** and weaken the body's ability to fight infection. **This makes welders 2.6 times more likely to get seriously ill from IPD.** The Health and Safety Executive in the UK also reported that **40 - 50 welders are hospitalized annually with pneumococcal pneumonia** with 1-2 deaths each year in the UK alone.

Luckily, **safe and effective vaccines are available** to protect welders from weld-fume related pneumococcal infections.

Vaccination Recommendations

Adults <65 years old with work exposure to welding/metal fumes should **receive one dose of a pneumococcal vaccine** to prevent IPD related illness. Vaccination coverage is often available through your employee benefits plan.

Adults 65+ are covered under Provincial and Territorial Immunization Schedules.

Employers can support access to vaccination by:

- Partnering with occupational health providers
- Running on-site vaccination clinics
- Providing vouchers or reimbursements for employment related vaccinations

Employer Action Plan

Identify at-risk workers



due to long-term exposure

Maintain ventilation systems



and provide proper PPE

Offer paid time off for vaccination



and track uptake confidentially

Coordinate with Occupational Health



and local public health units for vaccine access

Vaccination remains one of the best ways to safeguard yourself from preventable diseases, reduce the risk of serious illness and complications and prevent the spread of disease to others. Talk to your healthcare provider to learn more about how vaccination can support you and your families health and wellness.