

Infection Prevention and You



Pneumonia immunization

Pneumococcal disease is an infection caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria, sometimes referred to as pneumococcus. Pneumococcus can cause many types of illnesses, including pneumonia, blood infections, ear infections, and meningitis. There are vaccines to prevent pneumococcal disease in children and adults.

The best way to prevent pneumococcal disease is by getting vaccinated. The pneumococcal vaccine is a shot that helps protect against some of the more than 90 types of pneumococcal bacteria.

The vaccine for children, called **pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13)**, protects against the 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria that cause most of the severe illness in children. The vaccine can also help prevent some ear infections. PCV13 protects children by preparing their bodies to fight the bacteria. Almost all children (about 9 children out of 10) who get PCV13 will be protected from the 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria in the vaccine. PCV13 is also recommended to help prevent pneumococcal disease in adults with certain medical conditions.

The **pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23)** protects against 23 types of pneumococcal bacteria. It is recommended for all adults 65 years and older and for anyone who is 2 years and older at high risk for disease, including those:

- With chronic illnesses (lung, heart, liver, or kidney disease; asthma; diabetes; or alcoholism)
- With conditions that weaken the immune system (HIV/AIDS, cancer, or damaged/absent spleen)
- Living in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities
- With cochlear implants or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks (escape of the fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord)
- Who smoke cigarettes

Revaccination with PPSV23

- One-time revaccination 5 years after the first dose is recommended for anyone ages 19 to 64 with chronic renal failure or nephrotic syndrome; functional or anatomic asplenia (e.g., sickle cell disease or splenectomy); and for persons with immunocompromising conditions.
- Individuals who received 1 or 2 doses of PPSV23 before age 65 for any indication should receive another dose of the vaccine at age 65 or later if at least 5 years have passed since their previous dose.
- No further doses are needed for those vaccinated with PPSV23 at or after age 65.

BOTTOM LINE:

- Get your pneumonia immunization based on health history and age.
- Get revaccinated, if necessary.
- It is also important to get an influenza vaccine every year because having the flu increases your chances of getting pneumococcal disease.

Additional Resources

WebMD – Pneumococcal Vaccine <http://www.webmd.com/vaccines/pneumococcal-vaccine-schedule>

CDC – Pneumococcal <http://www.cdc.gov/pneumococcal/about/facts.html>