Pneumococcal Polysaccharide (PNEUMO-P) Vaccine

Immunization protects you from disease. Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get this disease.

What is the PNEUMO-P vaccine?
The PNEUMO-P vaccine protects against 23 strains (types) of the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that cause pneumococcal disease. Over 90% of pneumococcal disease is caused by these 23 strains.

Who should get the PNEUMO-P vaccine?
You should get the PNEUMO-P vaccine if you:
- are age 65 years or older
- live in a long-term care facility
- are between the ages of 2 years and 64 years and have a high risk of serious pneumococcal disease because of health problems (such as heart, lung, kidney, or liver problems, diabetes, or a weak immune system)
- have other risks, such as homelessness

How many doses do I need?
Healthy people age 65 years or older need 1 dose. If you have certain health problems, you may need 1 or 2 doses of this vaccine at an earlier age. Check with your healthcare provider to find out if you need doses at an earlier age and how many.

You still need a dose when you turn age 65 years, even if you already had the vaccine.

Are there other vaccines that protect against pneumococcal disease?
Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PNEU-C13) is another type of pneumococcal vaccine. Children age 4 years and younger get this vaccine. You may also get it if you had your spleen removed, have a weak immune system, or have other health problems.

If you need both the PNEUMO-P and PNEU-C13 vaccines, it is best to get the PNEU-C13 vaccine first. The 2 vaccines must be carefully spaced so you do not get them too close together.

How well does the vaccine work?
In older adults and high-risk groups, the protection against a serious infection from pneumococcal disease is 50% to 80%.

This protection may weaken after 5 to 10 years, but more doses of the vaccine may not boost protection.

Where can I get the PNEUMO-P vaccine?
You can get the vaccine at a public health office in your area. You may also be able to get it from your doctor or pharmacist.

Are there side effects from the PNEUMO-P vaccine?
There can be side effects from the PNEUMO-P vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:
- redness, warmth, swelling, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling tired
- a headache
- a fever
- body aches
It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect after a vaccine. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

**How can I manage side effects?**
- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with a fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Children under the age of 18 years should not take aspirin because it can cause serious health problems.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

**Who should not get the PNEUMO-P vaccine?**
You may not be able to get this vaccine if you:
- have an allergy to any part of the vaccine
- had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it

You can still get the vaccine if you have a mild illness, such as a cold or fever. Always tell your healthcare provider if you have allergies or if you have had a side effect from a vaccine in the past.

Check with your doctor or a public health nurse before you get the vaccine.

**For More Information**
- Call Health Link at 811
- Go to [ImmunizeAlberta.ca](http://ImmunizeAlberta.ca)
- Go to [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](http://MyHealth.Alberta.ca)

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**Facts about pneumococcal disease**

**What is pneumococcal disease?**
Pneumococcal disease:
- is caused by bacteria
- can lead to lung, airway, blood, and middle ear infections and meningitis (an infection of the fluid and lining that cover the brain and spinal cord)
- is the main cause of bacterial blood infections and meningitis in young children
- is the main cause of pneumonia (a type of lung infection) in adults
- causes 500,000 deaths worldwide each year in children under age 5 years

When adults with pneumococcal disease have a blood infection, 1 in 20 may die.

**Who is most at risk?**
You are most at risk of having a serious infection if you:
- are very young or very old
- live with certain health problems
- smoke
- are addicted to alcohol or use drugs

**How does it spread?**
Pneumococcal disease spreads through:
- coughing and sneezing
- saliva during kissing, sharing food, or sharing toys

Even if you do not have symptoms, you can still spread the disease.