

# Pneumococcal Conjugate 20 (PNEU-C20) Vaccine

## 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 these diseases.

## What is the PNEU-C20 vaccine?

The PNEU-C20 vaccine protects against 20 strains (types) of the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that cause pneumococcal disease.

## What is pneumococcal disease?

Pneumococcal disease is caused by bacteria. It 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).

Pneumococcal disease is a common cause of bacterial blood infections and meningitis in young children, and bacterial pneumonia (a type of lung infection) in adults.

It causes 700,000 deaths worldwide each year in children under age 5 years.

When adults with pneumococcal disease have an infection in their lungs and blood, as many as 1 in 14 could die. The risk of dying may be higher as you get older.

## Who is most at risk?

You are most at risk of having a serious infection if:

- You are very young or very old.
- You have certain chronic health problems.
- You live in a care facility, like a continuing care home.
- You smoke or vape.
- You have an alcohol or substance use problem.
- You experience homelessness.

## How does it spread?

Pneumococcal disease spreads through droplets of saliva (spit) and mucus when coughing, sneezing, kissing, and sharing things such as food or toys.

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

## Who should get the PNEU-C20 vaccine?

Getting this vaccine depends on your age, risk of serious disease, and whether you have already had pneumococcal vaccines.

Your healthcare provider may recommend you get this vaccine if:

- You are age 65 years or older.
- You are age 2 months to 64 years and you have a high risk of serious pneumococcal disease because of certain health problems (see below).
- You are an Indigenous person.
- You live in a care facility, like a continuing care home.
- You smoke or vape.
- You live in a home with poor indoor air quality, like if you use a wood-burning stove or live with someone who smokes inside the home.
- You have an alcohol or substance use problem.
- You experience homelessness.

Health problems that put you at high risk of serious pneumococcal disease include:

- your spleen was removed or does not work well
- heart, lung, liver, or kidney problems
- chronic cerebral spinal fluid leak
- you have had or are getting a cochlear implant
- diabetes
- human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- a weak immune system because of disease or medicine you take
- sickle cell disease
- you have had or will have a stem cell or solid organ transplant

If you are age 18 years or older and you have already had other pneumococcal vaccines, you may not need PNEU-C20 vaccine. Talk to your healthcare provider to find out if you have had all the doses of pneumococcal vaccines you need or if you can get this vaccine now or in the future.

## How many doses do I need?

If you can get this vaccine the number of doses you need depends on your age.

Most people age 25 months or older need 1 dose.

Children age 24 months and younger need more than 1 dose depending on their age when they start this vaccine. Because of the high risk of serious pneumococcal disease in this age group, it is not recommended to delay this immunization.

If your child has not had all of their pneumococcal vaccine doses as part of their routine immunizations, the PNEU-C20 vaccine can be used to complete their series. If your child has completed their pneumococcal vaccine series using a different pneumococcal vaccine, they are recommended to get a dose of PNEU-C20.

Ask your healthcare provider how many doses your child needs.

See reverse for more information.

## Are there other vaccines that protect against pneumococcal disease?

Pneumococcal conjugate 15 vaccine (PNEU-C15) protects against 15 types of the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that cause pneumococcal disease. It is part of Alberta's routine immunization schedule for children who are not at high risk for serious pneumococcal disease.

## How well does the vaccine work?

The PNEU-C20 vaccine protects against 20 types of the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that cause pneumococcal disease. How well the vaccine works is different for each type of bacteria. Compared to the other pneumococcal conjugate vaccines that protect against fewer types of bacteria, the PNEU-C20 vaccine may provide better protection against certain types of the bacteria that are currently spreading.

Immunization is the best way to protect yourself from getting pneumococcal disease.

## Where can I get the PNEU-C20 vaccine?

You can get the vaccine at your local public health or community health centre. You may also be able to get it from your doctor or pharmacist.

## Are there side effects from the PNEU-C20 vaccine?

There can be side effects from the PNEU-C20 vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, swelling, a hard spot, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling tired
- sleeping more or less than usual
- a headache
- a fever or chills
- body aches or sore joints
- getting upset easily
- not feeling hungry or not wanting to eat (poor appetite)
- vomiting (throwing up) or loose stool (diarrhea)
- rash

At least 1 out of 100 people who got this vaccine reported 1 or more of these side effects. In some cases, it is unknown if the vaccine caused these side effects.

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.



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## 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.
- 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.

## What if I had or am getting another type of vaccine?

You can get a PNEU-C20 vaccine at the same time, any time before, or any time after most vaccines. However, certain vaccines have a waiting period. Check with your healthcare provider about when you can get the PNEU-C20 vaccine if:

- You have already had other pneumococcal vaccines.
- You have had any vaccines in the last 6 weeks.

## Who should not get the PNEU-C20 vaccine?

You may not be able to get this vaccine if:

- You have an allergy to any part of the vaccine.
- You had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it.

If you have allergies or have had a side effect from this vaccine, check with your doctor or a public health nurse before you get the vaccine.

Although you can get the vaccine if you have a mild illness, such as a cold or fever, you should stay home until you are feeling better to prevent spreading your illness to others.

## I have a fear of needles. How can I prepare for my immunization?

Many adults and children are afraid of needles. You can do many things before, during, and after immunization to be more comfortable.



Scan the QR code, visit [ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort](https://ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort), or call Health Link at **811** for information.

## For more information about immunization



Call Health Link at **811**



Scan the QR code or go to [ahs.ca/immunize](https://ahs.ca/immunize)