

# Pneumococcal Conjugate (PNEU-C13) 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 PNEU-C13 vaccine?**

The PNEUMO-C13 vaccine protects against 13 strains (types) of the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that cause pneumococcal disease.

## **Who should have the PNEU-C13 vaccine?**

This vaccine is given to children starting at age 2 months.

You may also get this vaccine if you are at high risk for serious pneumococcal disease because of certain health problems. This includes not having a spleen or having a weak immune system.

Other people may also benefit from this vaccine, but it is not free. Check with your health insurance provider to see if your plan covers the cost.

## **How many doses do I need?**

Most healthy children need 3 doses which are given at ages 2, 4, and 12 months. An extra dose is given to children at age 6 months who have a high risk of serious pneumococcal disease.

You or your child may get fewer doses depending on your age when you start this vaccine. It is not recommended to delay this immunization because babies have a higher risk of this disease. Ask your healthcare provider how many doses you or your child needs.

If you have had a bone marrow transplant, ask your healthcare provider how many doses of the vaccine you need.

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

Yes, there are other pneumococcal conjugate vaccines. These vaccines protect against fewer types (strains) of pneumococcal disease than PNEU-C13. Check with a public health nurse if your child is age 4 years or younger and they have not had the PNEU-C13 vaccine.

Another vaccine that protects against pneumococcal disease is called the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PNEUMO-P). Anyone age 2 years and older with certain health problems should have the PNEUMO-P vaccine, even if you already had the PNEU-C13 vaccine. This includes:

- heart, lung, kidney, or liver problems
- diabetes
- a weak immune system
- all adults age 65 years and older

If you need both the PNEU-C13 and PNEUMO-P 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?**

Protection against serious pneumococcal disease (caused by 13 strains of bacteria) with the PNEU-C13 vaccine is about 86% to 97% for healthy children under age 5 years.

In adults age 65 years and older, protection against pneumonia or blood infections caused by pneumococcal disease is about 45% to 75%.

## **Where can I get the PNEU-C13 vaccine?**

If you can get this vaccine for free, you can get it at the public health office in your area.

If you want the vaccine and need to pay for it, contact a travel health clinic or talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

## Are there side effects from the PNEU-C13 vaccine?

There can be side effects from the PNEU-C13 vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, swelling, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling tired or getting upset easily
- headache
- fever or chills
- body aches
- not feeling hungry or not wanting to eat (poor appetite)
- vomiting or loose stool (diarrhea)
- rash

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. 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 fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dosage 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 have the PNEU-C13 vaccine?

You may not be able to have the vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to parts of the vaccine
- had a severe or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it

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

You can still have 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.

### For More Information



Call Health Link at 811



Go to [ImmunizeAlberta.ca](https://www.immunizealberta.ca)



Go to [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://www.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
- have certain chronic 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 these symptoms, you can still spread the disease.