



INFORMATION SHEET

Pneumococcal Conjugate 15 Vaccine (PNEU-C-15)

What is the PNEU-C-15 Vaccine?

The PNEU-C-15 vaccine is a safe and effective way to keep you from getting very sick from pneumococcal disease. The PNEU-C-15 vaccine protects against 15 strains (types) of the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that causes pneumococcal disease. The vaccine is made with a small amount of dead bacteria that will not cause disease but can help the immune system learn how to protect itself against the bacteria if it enters the body. This vaccine can be given to children starting at 2 months of age.

What is pneumococcal disease?

Pneumococcal disease can be caused by streptococcus bacteria that commonly live in the nose and throat. Pneumococcal infections can be mild or severe and range from ear and sinus infections to more severe conditions such as pneumonia (infection of the lungs). It can also cause life-threatening conditions called severe invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) such as:

- Septicemia (infection of the blood),
- Meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain).

Severe pneumococcal disease is a major cause of illness worldwide. It can cause significant health problems with lifelong complications, and sometimes death. Children younger than 5 years old and adults 65 years or older are at increased risk for pneumococcal disease.

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

In the NWT, children are recommended to receive PNEU-C-15 at 2, 4, 6 and 18 months.

If you are unsure if you or your child should receive PNEU-C-15, book an appointment with your local health care provider to discuss vaccination eligibility.

Septicemia is a bloodstream infection, sometimes referred to as blood poisoning. The bacteria can get in the blood and spread through the body infecting organs such as heart, kidneys and brain. Septicemia is always a life-threatening condition requiring urgent care.

Meningitis is an infection that causes swelling of the lining around the brain and spinal cord. Symptoms include:

- Stiff neck,
- Fatigue,
- Fever,
- Headache,
- Vomiting, and
- Seizures.

Meningitis can be deadly even with prompt medical treatment.

How is pneumococcal disease spread?

People spread pneumococcal bacteria to others through direct contact with respiratory secretions, like saliva or mucus through:

- Coughing,
- Sneezing,
- Face to face contact,
- Kissing, or
- Sharing toys, food, drinks, cigarettes, lipstick, water bottles and instruments.

People who become infected with the bacteria, but do not get sick, can still spread the infection to others.

Who should get the PNEU-C-15 vaccine?

Children under 5 years of age are more at risk for pneumococcal disease, therefore PNEU-C-15 is recommended to all babies, as a series of immunizations at 2, 4, 6 and 18 months. PNEU-C-15 immunization can provide long term protection against pneumococcal disease. Those immunized with pneumococcal vaccines also help to protect others such as pregnant individuals, babies, and people who are immunocompromised.

What are possible side effects to the PNEU-C-15 vaccine?

Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. Side effects, if they occur, are usually mild and go away within a few days. You can give medication for pain/fever to your child if needed. Check with your health care provider if you have concerns or need advice about which medications to give.

Mild side effects include:

swelling, redness, and soreness where you got the vaccine.

Other side effects can include:

- Fever,
- Drowsiness,
- Headache,
- Muscle or joint ache,
- Rash,
- Irritability, and
- Loss of appetite or an upset stomach.

Who should NOT get the PNEU-C-15 vaccine?

- Please contact your health care provider for more information.

To find out more about the PNEU-C-15 vaccine, contact your local health unit or visit the following links:

- **NWT Immunization Schedule:**
www.gov.nt.ca/nwtimmunization/schedule
- **Immunize Canada** <https://immunize.ca>
- To track of your family's immunizations and to receive vaccine schedule reminders download the [CANImmunize App](#).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is a rare possibility of a severe allergic reaction. This usually happens soon after vaccination and may include: **hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips.**

If this happens after you leave the clinic, call or go to the nearest emergency department or health centre for immediate treatment.

Please report any serious or unexpected side-effects to your healthcare provider