



INFORMATION SHEET

Pneumococcal Conjugate 20 Vaccine (PNEU-C-20)

What is the PNEU-C-20 Vaccine?

The PNEU-C-20 vaccine is a safe and effective way to keep you from getting very sick from pneumococcal disease. The PNEU-C-20 vaccine protects against 20 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 anyone 2 months of age or older. In the NWT PNEU-C-20 is generally recommended for adults.

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, it is recommended that anyone 65 years and older, or who are between the ages of 2 months - 64 years old with high-risk medical conditions should receive the vaccine.

If you are unsure if you or your child should receive PNEU-C-20, 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, kidney 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-20 vaccine?

People with chronic medical conditions (asthma, COPD, diabetes), weakened immune systems, or those who have lifestyle risk factors such as alcohol use, substance use, and who smoke are at increased risk for pneumococcal disease.

Adults 65 years of age and over are recommended to receive 1 dose of PNEU-C-20. For those between the ages of 2 months - 64 years old with high-risk medical conditions are recommended to receive a dose of PNEU-C-20. PNEU-C-20 is also given as an additional fifth dose to high-risk children ages 4-6 years. 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-20 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 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-20 vaccine?

- Please contact your health care provider for more information.

To find out more about the PNEU-C-20 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