



Pneumococcal Polysaccharide 23 (Pneu-P-23)

What is the Pneu-P-23 Vaccine?

The Pneu-P-23 vaccine is a safe and effective way to keep you from getting very sick from the real disease. It is approved by Health Canada. The Pneu-P-23 vaccine (shot) is made with a tiny amount of dead germs. Vaccines help the immune system learn how to protect itself against the real disease.

Is pneumococcal disease serious?

Pneumococcal disease includes:

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

Pneumococcal disease can cause deafness and sometimes death.

Pneumonia is a severe disease of the lungs causing fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. It can be deadly.

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.

The best way to protect against pneumococcal infection is with the Pneu-P-23 vaccine. All people 65 years and older should get this vaccine. People between the ages of 2 - 64 years old may benefit from this vaccine if they have certain high risk medical conditions.

Meningitis can be deadly even with prompt medical treatment.

Septicemia is a bloodstream infection, which can lead to loss of an arm or leg and even death.

How is pneumococcal disease spread?

Pneumococcal infection is caused by bacteria that can be spread easily from one person to another. It is spread by coming into contact with an infected person's saliva 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.



Why should you get the Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

Immunization is the best way to protect against pneumococcal disease.

When you are immunized you also help protect others. Someone who is vaccinated is less likely to spread infection.

What are possible reactions to the Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. Most people who get the Pneu-P-23 vaccine do not have any reactions.

Possible signs of reactions to the vaccine include:

- Soreness,
- Redness, and
- Swelling where the vaccine was given.

Other signs include:

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

These are mild reactions and usually last one to two days.

Who should NOT get the Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

Speak to your health care provider.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol® and Tempra®) can be given for fever or soreness.

ASA (Aspirin®) should **NEVER** be given to children because it can cause a severe liver and brain disease called Reye's Syndrome.

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 can 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 your local health centre for immediate treatment.

Report any serious or unexpected side-effects to your public health nurse.

Who should get the Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

Pneu-P-23 is given according to the following schedule depending on age and health risks:

SCHEDULE FOR ADULTS (18 or over)			
Vaccine	Age		
	65 years of age or older regardless of risk	Under 65* years of age + at risk of invasive disease	Booster required for certain high risk medical conditions
Pneu-P-23*	1 dose	1 dose	5 years

* For those with certain high risk medical conditions, PCV-13 vaccine may be recommended 8 weeks before receiving Pneu-C-23. To see if this would apply to you discuss it with your public health nurse or doctor.

To find out more about the Pneu-P-23 vaccine contact your local health centre to speak to your public health nurse or visit the following links:

- NWT Immunization Schedule:
<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>
- Immunize Canada:
<https://immunize.ca>
- To keep track of your family's immunizations on your smart phone or tablet and to receive vaccine schedule reminders please download the CANImmunize App at:
<https://www.canimmunize.ca>

Your local health care centre is located at the address below.

Place Health Centre
contact information
here.