

Pneumococcal vaccine for children

What to do if there is a reaction to pneumococcal conjugate vaccine?

For pain or swelling where the needle was given, apply a cool damp towel to the area. For pain or fever, give acetaminophen (also called Tylenol® or Tempra®) as directed on the bottle.

NOTE: Acetylsalicylic acid (ASA or Aspirin®) is not recommended for persons 18 years of age or under because of increased risk of Reye's syndrome.

Call your local public health nurse if you have questions or if there is an unusual reaction to this vaccine.

Talk to a public health nurse or doctor before getting this vaccine, if the person who is to get the vaccine:

- has severe allergies to any part of the vaccine.
- is sick now with something more serious than a cold or has a fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F).
- has a severe allergy to something.
- has a weakened immune system.

Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine should not be given if:

The person has had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose or to a component of this vaccine.

For more information

Call your local public health office or Health Link Alberta at:

Calgary: 403-943-5465

Edmonton: 780-408-5465

Toll free 1-866-408-5465 elsewhere in Alberta.

You may also visit the Alberta Health and Wellness website at: www.health.gov.ab.ca

Pneumococcal

Pneumococcal vaccine

Important information
about this vaccine

Immunization Information

What is pneumococcal disease?

A bacteria called *Streptococcus pneumoniae* causes pneumococcal disease. Bacteria entering the body can cause serious infections such as meningitis and pneumonia, as well as severe long-term effects like deafness and brain damage. Many children and adults carry the bacteria in their nose and throat for a short time and do not become ill.

Who is at risk for pneumococcal disease?

In 2002, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that pneumococcal disease was the most common vaccine-preventable cause of death among children less than five years of age worldwide, causing an estimated 716,000 deaths in this age group. Although the disease can develop in all age groups, children under the age of two and the elderly are at greatest risk for serious invasive pneumococcal disease.

Is the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine safe?

Yes, pneumococcal conjugate vaccine is safe. It does not contain living bacteria or viruses. In Canada, vaccines must undergo laboratory and field-testing, and pass a rigorous licensing procedure with the federal

government before being introduced. Once a vaccine is approved, every lot is tested for safety and quality. In addition, side effects are continuously monitored.

What if the person to receive this vaccine is allergic to thimerosal or latex?

The pneumococcal conjugate vaccine does not contain thimerosal and there is no latex in the product or the packaging.

What are the side effects of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine?

There can be some side effects with this vaccine but they are generally mild and over quickly. For one to three days some babies may:

- have some pain, redness and/or swelling in the area where the needle was given.
- have a mild fever.
- be slightly fussy or irritable.
- have a change in appetite.
- be slightly drowsy.

About the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine:

Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine is 79 to 98.5 per cent effective across 11 of the 13 vaccine serotypes after receiving the second dose. After the third dose, antibodies for all vaccine serotypes ranged from 88.2 - 100 per cent in infants and children in preventing invasive pneumococcal disease, including meningitis and pneumonia. In Alberta, this vaccine is provided because it is highly effective in preventing serious invasive disease.

In July 2010, the schedule for this vaccine changed to a three dose simplified schedule, with doses at 2, 4 and 12 months of age. This is a reduction of one dose from the previous schedule for this vaccine.

Children at high risk of invasive pneumococcal disease will continue to be given four doses of this vaccine at 2, 4, 6 months of age with a final dose at 12 months of age.

It is given at the same time as other childhood immunizations for those ages, but in a separate needle.

Serious side effects are not common. However, with any immunization, unexpected or unusual reactions can occur. Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) are rare, occurring at a rate of about one to three reports per 1,000,000 doses of vaccine distributed.

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