

Pneumococcal Polysaccharide (Pneu-P-23) Vaccine



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES

What is invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD)?

Pneumococcal disease is caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, often referred to as pneumococcus. It can cause many types of illnesses including infections of the ears and sinuses. It is spread from person-to-person by direct contact with respiratory secretions, like saliva or mucus. Pneumococcus can lead to more serious infections of the lungs (pneumonia), blood (sepsis) and brain (meningitis). These infections are referred to as Invasive Pneumococcal Disease (IPD). Persons are often hospitalized and usually recover with antibiotic treatment. Occasionally, this infection can cause long-term complications or death. Anyone can get IPD, however some people are at greater risk: the very young (less than two years), the elderly and certain specific high-risk individuals.

Who should get the vaccine?

Pneu-P-23 vaccine is licenced for use for anyone over two years of age.

In Ontario, it is publicly funded for anyone 65 years of age and older. It is also funded for children two years and older and adults who have the following high-risk medical conditions:

- Sickle cell disease or other sickle cell disease disorders
- Non-functioning or missing spleen
- HIV infection
- Conditions that suppress the immune system (e.g., cancer, organ transplant, nephrotic syndrome, long-term corticosteroid use)
- Chronic medical conditions (e.g., chronic heart or lung disease, diabetes mellitus, cerebrospinal fluid leak, chronic kidney or liver disease)
- Before or after a cochlear implant

- Inherited immunodeficiencies that affect immune function
- Malignant neoplasms including leukemia and lymphoma
- Individuals who have undergone human stem cell transplant
- Residents of nursing homes, homes for the aged and chronic care facilities
- Cirrhosis of the liver
- Alcoholism

About eight out of ten IPD cases occur in these high-risk groups.

Pneu-P-23 Vaccine:

Pneumococcal vaccine protects against 23 strains of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria. These types account for approximately nine out of 10 cases of pneumococcal disease.

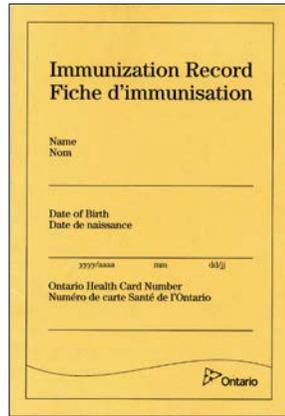
The vaccine is moderately effective (50-80 per cent) against 23 of the most common strains of pneumococcus. It also reduces the severity of illness if it occurs. The best time to get the vaccine is as soon as you develop a high-risk medical condition or when you turn 65. It is usually administered once in your lifetime. Only a few people will need a second dose. Your health care provider can help you determine your need.

Who should NOT have the vaccine?

- Anyone with a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold
- Anyone with an allergy to a component of the vaccine including phenol, monosodium phosphate or disodium phosphate
- Children under two years of age
- Anyone who had a reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine

Side effects

You may experience some pain, swelling or redness at the injection site. Occasionally slight fever may occur. Other side effects such as headache, a higher fever or fatigue may occur, but these are rare.



Your record of protection

After any immunization, ensure your personal immunization record or "yellow card" is updated. Keep it in a safe place.

Questions?

Talk to your health care provider or contact Public Health at 519-575-4400.

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.

Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services

Infectious Diseases, Dental and Sexual Health