

Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccines (Pneu-C-15 and Pneu-C-20)



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH AND
PARAMEDIC SERVICES

What is pneumococcal?

Pneumococcal is a type of bacteria called *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (or pneumococcus).

This type of bacteria can cause serious and life-threatening infections, like any of the following:

- Meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain)
- Septicemia (infection in the blood)
- Pneumonia (infection of the lungs)
- More commonly, pneumococcal bacteria can cause:
 - Otitis media (ear infections)
 - Sinusitis (sinus infections)

Most pneumococcal infections are mild but can invade parts of the body that are normally bacteria-free. When this happens, a serious disease called invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) can develop, which can have serious symptoms, lifelong disability, or even death. Meningitis, septicemia, and pneumonia caused by IPD can be fatal.

The bacteria can live at the back of the nose and throat without causing symptoms. People of all ages can be healthy carriers of pneumococci bacteria, but young children are the most frequent carriers of the bacteria.

The bacteria is spread through droplets in the air from coughing or sneezing. Bacteria can also be spread through saliva if an infected person shares common items like beverages (bottles, straws), eating utensils or chewing on toys.

Sometimes antibiotics do not work against pneumococcal infections, and when this happens, it is more difficult to treat the infection.

Who should get the vaccine?

Pneumococcal infection is most common in the very young, the elderly and certain specific groups at high risk, such as individuals with functional or anatomic asplenia and congenital or acquired immune deficiency, including those with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). About one in four children who become ill have an underlying medical condition.

Two pneumococcal conjugate (Pneu-C) vaccines are available for use and protect against up to 20 different types of bacteria that cause pneumococcal disease. Both vaccines provide a high level of protection for the person immunized and prevent passing the bacteria onto others who may be at risk.

Pneu-C-15 Vaccine

Pneu-C-15 (Vaxneuvance) protects against 15 types of bacteria (1, 3, 4, 5, 6A, 6B, 7F, 9V, 14, 18C, 19A, 19F, 22F, 23F and 33F).

It is publicly funded for healthy children from six weeks to under five years of age. The vaccine is routinely given to healthy children at 2, 4 and 12 months of age.

Pneu-C-20 Vaccine

Pneu-C-20 (Prevnar 20) protects against 20 types of bacteria (1, 3, 4, 5, 6A, 6B, 7F, 8, 9V, 10A, 11A, 12F, 14, 15B, 18C, 19A, 19F, 22F, 23F, and 33F). It is publicly funded for high-risk individuals over 6 months of age and for adults 65 and older. High-risk children receive the vaccine at 2, 4, 6 and 12 months of age. Individuals between 5-64 years old with high-risk conditions, and those over 65, are eligible for one dose.

High-risk individuals include:

- People with sickle cell disease or other sickle cell 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 neurologic, heart or lung disease, diabetes mellitus, cerebrospinal fluid leak, chronic kidney or liver disease, cancer)
- Before or after a cochlear implant
- Residents of nursing homes, homes for the aged and chronic care
- Those who are underhoused or experiencing homelessness
- Individuals with substance use disorder

Catch-up immunizations are available to those who miss their scheduled doses. Individuals who have received all eligible publicly funded doses of pneumococcal vaccines based on their age and risk of IPD may not be eligible for additional doses. Speak with your health care provider to determine your vaccine eligibility and schedule.

Who should not get the vaccine?

You should not be immunized if you have:

- an allergy to diphtheria or aluminum
- a severe allergic reaction to a prior dose of the vaccine
- a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.

**Region of Waterloo Public Health
and Paramedic Services**

Infectious Disease

What are the side effects?

Most reactions are mild and last for one or two days. These can include soreness, redness or swelling where the vaccine was given, itching or rash where the needle was given, fever, drowsiness, loss of appetite, headache, muscle or joint ache, chills or fussiness (infants only).

When should I seek medical attention?

If you develop hives, swelling of the face or mouth, trouble breathing, serious drowsiness or other serious problems.

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.

www.regionofwaterloo.ca/ph

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