

# Pneumococcal Polysaccharide (PNEUMO-P) Vaccine

## Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.

### What is the PNEUMO-P vaccine?

The PNEUMO-P vaccine protects against 23 strains (types) of the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that cause pneumococcal disease. These 23 strains cause more than 25% of pneumococcal disease in any age and over 65% of pneumococcal disease in adults age 65 years or older.

### What is pneumococcal disease?

Pneumococcal disease is caused by bacteria. It can lead to lung, airway, blood, and middle-ear infections and meningitis (an infection of the fluid and lining that cover the brain and spinal cord). Pneumococcal disease is a common cause of bacterial blood infections and meningitis in young children, and bacterial pneumonia (a type of lung infection) in adults. It causes 500,000 deaths worldwide each year in children under age 5 years.

When adults with pneumococcal disease have an infection in their lungs and blood, as many as 1 in 14 could die. The risk of dying may be higher as you get older.

### Who is most at risk?

You are most at risk of having a serious infection if:

- You are very young or very old.
- You are a child who attends day care.
- You have certain chronic health problems.
- You smoke.
- You have an alcohol or substance use problem.

### How does it spread?

Pneumococcal disease spreads through droplets of saliva (spit) and mucus when coughing, sneezing, kissing, and sharing things such as food or toys.

Even if you do not have symptoms, you can still spread the disease.

### Who should get the PNEUMO-P vaccine?

You should get the PNEUMO-P vaccine if:

- You are age 65 years or older.
- You are between the ages of 2 years and 64 years and have a high risk of serious pneumococcal disease because of health problems (see below)
- You live in a long-term care facility.
- You have other risks, such as homelessness or an alcohol or substance use problem.

### How many doses do I need?

Healthy people age 65 years or older need 1 dose. You may need 1 or 2 doses of this vaccine at an earlier age if you have health problems such as:

- your spleen was removed or does not work well
- heart, lung, liver, or kidney problems
- chronic cerebral spinal fluid leak
- cochlear implants
- diabetes
- human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- a weak immune system because of disease or medicine you take
- sickle cell disease
- you have had or will have a stem cell or solid organ transplant

Check with your healthcare provider to find out if you need doses at an earlier age and how many doses you need.

You still need a dose when you turn age 65 years, even if you have already had the vaccine. Before you get this dose, you need to wait 5 years from when you had your previous dose of this vaccine.

### Are there other vaccines that protect against pneumococcal disease?

There are other vaccines that protect against pneumococcal disease:

**Pneumococcal 13-valent conjugate vaccine (PNEU-C13)** protects against 13 types of the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that cause pneumococcal disease. As part of the routine immunization schedule, children get this vaccine starting at age 2 months. You may be recommended to get both the PNEU-C13 and PNEUMO-P vaccine if you had your spleen removed or have a weak immune system or other health problems.

If you need both the PNEUMO-P and PNEU-C13 vaccines, it is best to get the PNEU-C13 vaccine first. The 2 vaccines must be carefully spaced, as recommended by your healthcare provider, so you do not get them too close together.

**Pneumococcal 20-valent conjugate vaccine (PCV 20)** is available to buy from pharmacies or doctors for people 18 years of age and older. If you have had this vaccine, you may not need the PNEUMO-P vaccine.

Ask your healthcare provider what pneumococcal vaccines you should have.

### How well does the vaccine work?

How well the vaccine works depends on your age and general health. In older adults and high-risk groups, the protection against a serious infection from pneumococcal disease is 50% to 80%.

Protection may weaken after 5 to 10 years. However, getting more doses of the vaccine may not boost protection and is not recommended at this time.

It takes about 10 to 15 days after getting the vaccine to be protected against pneumococcal disease.

## Where can I get the PNEUMO-P vaccine?

You can get the vaccine at your local public health or community health centre. You may also be able to get it from your doctor or pharmacist.

## Are there side effects from the PNEUMO-P vaccine?

There can be side effects from the PNEUMO-P vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, warmth, swelling, a hard spot, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling tired
- a headache
- a fever
- body aches

At least 1 out of 100 people who got this vaccine reported 1 or more of these side effects. In some cases, it is unknown if the vaccine caused these side effects.

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect after a vaccine. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

## How can I manage side effects?

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with a fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

## What if I had or am getting another type of vaccine?

You can get a PNEUMO-P vaccine at the same time, any time before, or any time after most vaccines. However, certain vaccines have a waiting period. Check with your healthcare provider about when you can get the PNEUMO-P vaccine if you:

- need both the PNEUMO-P and PNEU-C13 vaccines
- had any vaccines in the last 2 weeks

## Who should not get the PNEUMO-P vaccine?

You may not be able to get this vaccine if:

- You have an allergy to any part of the vaccine.
- You had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it.

If you have allergies or have had a side effect to this vaccine, check with your doctor or a public health nurse before you get the vaccine.

Although you can get the vaccine if you have a mild illness, such as a cold or fever, you should stay home until you are feeling better to prevent spreading your illness to others.

## I have a fear of needles. How can I prepare for my immunization?

Many adults and children are afraid of needles. You can do many things before, during, and after immunization to be more comfortable.

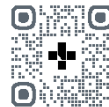


Scan the QR code, visit [ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort](https://ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort), or call Health Link at 811 for information.

## For more information about immunization



Call Health Link at **811**



Scan the QR code or go to [ahs.ca/immunize](https://ahs.ca/immunize)

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