Immunization protects you from disease. Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger by building antibodies, which help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get this disease.

**Who should have PNEU-C13 vaccine?**

This vaccine is given to children starting at 2 months of age.

This vaccine is also offered to older children and adults with a higher risk of serious pneumococcal disease due to health problems (e.g., no spleen, weak immune system).

Other people may also benefit from this vaccine, but it is not free. Check with your health insurance provider as some plans may cover the cost.

**How many doses of this vaccine are needed?**

Most healthy children need 3 doses which are given at 2, 4, and 12 months of age. An extra dose is given at 6 months of age for children at high risk because of certain health problems.

Fewer doses are needed if immunization is started after 7 months of age. Delaying this immunization is not recommended because babies have a higher risk of this disease.

For people with a higher risk of serious pneumococcal disease, only 1 dose is needed if it is given at 5 years of age or older. People who have had a bone marrow transplant should check with their healthcare provider to determine how many doses of vaccine are needed.

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

There are other pneumococcal conjugate vaccines which protect against fewer strains than PNEU-C13. Check with a public health nurse if your child is 4 years of age or younger and has not had PNEU-C13 vaccine.

There is another pneumococcal vaccine called pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PNEUMO-P). Anyone 2 years of age and older with certain health problems (e.g., heart, lung, kidney, and liver problems; diabetes; weak immune system) and all adults 65 years of age and older should have PNEUMO-P vaccine, even if they have already had PNEU-C13.

For people who need both PNEU-C13 and PNEUMO-P vaccines, it is best to get PNEU-C13 vaccine first. The 2 vaccines must be carefully spaced.

**How well does the vaccine work?**

Protection against serious infection (e.g., blood infections and meningitis) caused by the 13 strains covered by PNEU-C13 vaccine is about 86% to 97% for healthy children under 5 years of age.

In adults 65 years and older, protection against pneumonia or blood infections is about 45% to 75%.

**Where can I get PNEU-C13 vaccine?**

Anyone who qualifies for free vaccine should contact the public health office in their area.

Adults who want the vaccine and need to pay for it should contact a travel health clinic (e.g., AHS Travel Health Services) or speak to their doctor or pharmacist.
Are there side effects from PNEU-C13 vaccine?
Reactions to the vaccine are usually mild and go away in a few days. They may include:

- redness, swelling, and discomfort where the needle was given
- feeling tired, irritable
- headache or body aches
- fever or chills
- poor appetite, vomiting, or diarrhea
- rash

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after immunization because people can have a rare but serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). If anaphylaxis happens, you will be given medicine to treat the symptoms.

Unusual reactions can happen. Call Health Link at 811 to report any unusual reactions.

How can I manage side effects?
- To help with discomfort and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area.
- If you need fever or pain medicine, check with your pharmacist or doctor. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 19 years old because it can cause serious health problems.
- Some people with health problems (e.g., weak immune system) must call their doctor whenever they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor—even if you think the fever was due to immunization.

Is there anyone who cannot have PNEU-C13 vaccine?
You may not be able to have the vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to parts of the vaccine—always tell your healthcare provider about allergies.
- had a severe or unusual reaction after this vaccine (or a similar one)—always tell your healthcare provider if you have had reactions.

You can be immunized if you have a mild illness (e.g., cold), even if you have a fever.

For More Information

- Call Health Link at 811
- Go to immunizealberta.ca
- Go to myhealth.alberta.ca

Quick Facts: Pneumococcal Disease

What it is
- bacteria that can cause respiratory and middle ear infections, pneumonia, meningitis (infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord), and blood infections
- main cause of bacterial blood infections and meningitis in young children and pneumonia in adults
- causes 500,000 deaths per year in children under 5 years old, worldwide
- when adults get this disease and have a blood infection, 1 in 20 can die

Who is most at risk
Most serious infections happen in people who:

- are very young or very old
- have certain chronic health conditions
- smoke or are addicted to alcohol or drugs

How it spreads
- spread by coughing and sneezing
- can spread from saliva (e.g. kissing, sharing food, sharing toys)
- some people do not have symptoms, but can spread the disease