

# Pneumococcal Polysaccharide 23 Vaccine

Vaccines have saved more lives in Canada in the last 60 years than any other medical intervention. Vaccines help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause diseases.

## Some pneumococcal diseases are vaccine preventable.

- **Pneumococcal disease** is caused by different types of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* ('strep') bacteria.
- These bacteria can cause ear infections, sinus infections or bronchitis.
- They can cause serious and life-threatening infections of the lungs (pneumonia), of the blood (bacteremia) and the lining that covers the brain (meningitis).
- Permanent complications include brain damage and deafness.
- For every 100 people who get pneumococcal disease, up to 7 could die.
- People with certain medical conditions have a high risk of having pneumococcal disease.

## How are pneumococcal bacteria spread?

- Pneumococcal bacteria are spread directly from one person to another by coughing, sneezing or close face-to-face contact.
- People can pick up the bacteria if they touch surfaces that have the bacteria on them.
- The bacteria can be spread through saliva (spit) when people share things like food and drinks.
- Babies and children can become sick by using soothers, bottles or toys that are used by other children.
- Children younger than 5 years old who attend child care centers are **2 to 3 times** more likely to develop pneumococcal disease and ear infections than children who don't attend child care centres.

## How can pneumococcal disease be prevented?

- Be immunized. When you get your child immunized, you help protect others as well.
- Practice good hygiene (e.g. handwashing).

## Who can get this vaccine for free?

**Only 1 lifetime dose unless indicated\*.**

- Adults 65 years or older **who have not received** a previous dose(s) for any reason.
- Residents of extended or intermediate care facilities including group homes.

### Persons 2-64 years with the following conditions:

- Alcoholism
- Cardiac (heart) disease
- Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) disorders
- Cochlear implant (candidate or recipient)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Diabetes mellitus
- Homelessness
- Illicit drug use
- Neurological conditions that impeded the clearance of respiratory/oral secretions
- Pulmonary (lung) disease (excluding asthma, unless on high doses of oral corticosteroid therapy)
- Acquired complement deficiency\*
- Asplenia\* (congenital, acquired or functional)
- Congenital immunodeficiency\*
- Hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipient\*
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)\*
- Immunosuppressive medical treatment\* (e.g., chemotherapy, radiation, high dose steroids)
- Liver disease\* (including cirrhosis, hepatitis B and hepatitis C)
- Malignancies/Cancer\*
- Renal (kidney) disease\*
- Sickle cell disease and other hemoglobinopathies\*
- Solid organ or islet cell transplant candidate or recipient\*

\*Individuals with these specific health conditions have at high risk of getting pneumococcal disease, and are eligible for a second vaccine dose **at least 5 years** after their first dose.

## Who should not get this vaccine?

- **A mild illness, with or without a fever, is not a reason to avoid immunization.**
- Persons who have a serious illness, with or without a fever, should delay immunization.
- People who had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of any pneumococcal vaccine, or any components of the vaccine.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Tempra) may be given for fever or soreness. ASA (Aspirin) must NOT be given to anyone younger than 18 years old because of the risk of Reye syndrome.

## What are common reactions to this vaccine?

- **Vaccines are very safe and effective. It is much safer to get this vaccine than to get pneumococcal disease.**
- Temporary soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site.
  - ❖ In a few people, this reaction may last up to 10 days.
- Headache and mild fever.
- These mild reactions generally last 1 to 2 days.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than 1 in a million people who get the vaccine. If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number.

## Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, or nurse practitioner as soon as possible.

## Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about your or your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If you had to take your child to a doctor, a hospital or to a health centre with a symptom that might be related to immunization.

## What does this vaccine contain?

**PNEUMOVAX® 23** contains purified capsular polysaccharides from 23 serotypes of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria, sodium chloride, phenol and water for injection. Latex and thimerosal free.

## Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents/guardians discuss consent for immunization with their children. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for immunizations. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

To ensure that a complete immunization record is maintained, every immunization administered to an individual will be documented by Public Health into the electronic provincial immunization registry, known as Panorama. Panorama is a secure electronic system used in Saskatchewan to record and manage immunization records and the health information related to immunization for all Saskatchewan residents. Immunization records may be shared with other health care professionals to provide public health services; assist with diagnosis and treatment; and to control the spread of vaccine preventable diseases. Information about Panorama is detailed in the "Protecting the Privacy of Your Immunization Record" fact sheet.

**For more information contact your local public health office, your physician, Nurse Practitioner, HealthLine online or by calling 811.**

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