

Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine

Pneumococcal Polysaccharide vaccine is given to prevent or lessen the complications of Invasive Pneumococcal Infections. The vaccine covers 23 different strains of the bacteria. Pneumococcal bacteria are spread from person to person through droplets in the air by coughing and sneezing and by sharing eating utensils and kissing. The risk of Pneumococcal infection is higher when an individual is already affected with a viral infection such as influenza.

Streptococcus Pneumoniae bacteria infections CAN cause:

- Ear infections
- Sinus infections
- Pneumonia
- Meningitis — infection of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord
- Infections of the blood stream

Complications may lead to:

- Deafness
- Brain damage
- Death (26% of meningitis cases)



Many people who are exposed to pneumococcal bacteria do not get sick but there are some people at higher risk of getting sick. The vaccine is offered free of charge to at risk individuals as part of the Yukon immunization program. Individuals who can receive the vaccine include:

- Those over 65 years of age
- Those with a chronic condition like diabetes, liver disease, heart disease, lung disease, chronic kidney disease, asplenia or alcoholism
- Those who have weakened immune systems due to disease or drugs
- Smokers
- Illicit drug users
- The homeless

Possible side effects of the vaccine:

- Redness, pain and swelling at the injection site (60%)
- Fever lasting less than 24 hours (2%)
- Headache and fatigue (less than 8%)

What to do:

- Apply a cold compress to the vaccine site.
- Administer acetaminophen-type medication if oral temperature is 38.5°C or higher.

Severe allergic reactions are very rare, begin immediately and can be treated by the person who gave you the vaccine. You will be asked to wait for 15 minutes after the immunization so that an allergic reaction, if there is one, can be treated.

**Consult your health care provider if side effects persist over 48 hours.
For more information on vaccinations, visit: <http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/>**

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