

Pneumococcal Conjugate (PNEU-C13) 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 PNEU-C13 vaccine?

The PNEU-C13 vaccine protects against 13 strains (types) of the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that cause pneumococcal disease.

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 PNEU-C13 vaccine?

As part of the routine immunization schedule, children get this vaccine starting at age 2 months. You may also get this vaccine if you are at high risk for serious pneumococcal disease because of certain health problems. This includes:

- not having a spleen or having a spleen that does not work well
- chronic cerebral spinal fluid leak
- cochlear implants
- human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- a hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT)
- a weak immune system because of disease or medicine you take
- sickle cell disease
- a solid organ transplant (such as lung, liver, or kidney)

If you want this vaccine but are not eligible to get it for free, you may be able to pay to get it from a private immunization clinic, doctor's office, or pharmacy. Ask your healthcare provider if this vaccine is right for you. Check with your health insurance provider to see if your plan covers the cost.

How many doses do I need?

Most healthy children need 3 doses, which are given at ages 2, 4, and 12 months. Children who have a high risk of serious pneumococcal disease get an extra dose at age 6 months.

You or your child may get fewer doses depending on your age when you start this vaccine. It is not recommended to delay this immunization because babies have a higher risk of this disease. Ask your healthcare provider how many doses you or your child needs.

If you have had a stem cell transplant, ask your healthcare provider how many doses of the vaccine you need.

Are there other vaccines that protect against pneumococcal disease?

There are other pneumococcal conjugate vaccines. Some of these vaccines protect against fewer types (strains) of pneumococcal disease than PNEU-C13. Check with a public health nurse if your child is age 4 years or younger and they have not had the PNEU-C13 vaccine.

Another vaccine that protects against pneumococcal disease is called the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PNEUMO-P). Anyone age 2 years and older with certain health problems should have the PNEUMO-P vaccine, even if you already had the PNEU-C13 vaccine. This includes people:

- with heart, lung, kidney, or liver problems
- with diabetes
- with a weak immune system
- who are age 65 years or older

If you need both the PNEU-C13 and PNEUMO-P 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 PNEU-C13 vaccine.

Ask your healthcare provider what pneumococcal vaccines you should have.

How well does the vaccine work?

Protection against serious pneumococcal disease (caused by 13 strains of bacteria) with the PNEU-C13 vaccine is about 86% to 97% for healthy children under age 5 years.

In adults age 65 years and older, protection against pneumonia caused by pneumococcal disease is about 38% to 68%.

Where can I get the PNEU-C13 vaccine?

If you can get this vaccine for free, you can get it at your local public health or community health centre.

If you want the vaccine and need to pay for it, contact a private immunization clinic or talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Are there side effects from the PNEU-C13 vaccine?

There can be side effects from the PNEU-C13 vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, swelling, a hard spot, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling tired or getting upset easily
- increased or decreased sleep
- headache
- fever or chills
- body aches or sore joints
- not feeling hungry or not wanting to eat (poor appetite)
- vomiting (throwing up) or loose stool (diarrhea)
- rash

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. 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 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.

Who should not get the PNEU-C13 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 from 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, 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