

Pneumococcal Disease

Pneumococcal disease kills more people in the United States each year than all other vaccine preventable disease combined. Anyone can get pneumococcal disease. However, some people are at greater risk from the disease. These include people 65 and older, the very young, and people with special health problems such as alcoholism, heart or lung disease, kidney failure, diabetes, HIV infection, or certain types of cancer.

Pneumococcal disease can lead to serious infections of the lungs (pneumonia), the blood (bacteremia), and the covering of the brain (meningitis). About 1 out of every 20 people who get pneumococcal pneumonia die from it, as do about 2 people out of 10 who get meningitis. People with the special health problems mentioning above are even more likely to die form the disease.

Drug such as penicillin were once effective in treating these infections; but the disease has become more resistant to these drugs, making treatment of pneumococcal infections more difficult. This makes prevention of the disease through vaccination even more important.

Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV)

The pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV) protects again 23 types of pneumococcal bacteria. Most healthy adults who get the vaccine develop protection to most or all of these types within 2 to 3 weeks of getting the injection. Very old people, children under 2 years of age, and people with some long-term illnesses might not respond as well or at all.

Persons who should receive the pneumococcal vaccine

Individuals in any of the following categories:

1. All adults 65 years of age or older.
2. Anyone who has a long-term health problem such as: heart disease, sickle cell disease, alcoholism, leaks of cerebrospinal fluid, lung disease, diabetes, cirrhosis.
3. Anyone who has a disease or condition that lowers the body's resistance to infection, such as: Hodgkin's disease, kidney failure, nephrotic syndrome, damaged spleen, or no spleen, organ transplant, lymphoma, leukemia, multiple myeloma, HIV infection or AIDS.
4. Anyone who is taking any drug or treatment that lowers the body's resistance to infection, such as: long-term steroids, radiation therapy, certain cancer drugs.

How many doses of PPV are needed?

Usually one dose of PPV is all that is needed. However, under some circumstances a second dose my be given. A second dose is recommended for those people aged 65 and older who got their first dose when they were under 65, if 5 or more years have passed since that dose. A second dose is also recommended for people who:

- have a damaged spleen or no spleen
- have sickle-cell disease
- have HIV infection or AIDS
- have cancer, leukemia, lymphoma, multiple-myeloma
- have kidney failure
- have nephrotic syndrome
- have had a organ or bone marrow transplant
- are taking medication that lowers immunity (such as chemotherapy or long-term steroids)

Name:
Reg. No.:
Institution:

