

Pneumococcal Vaccines

Pneumococcal [new-moh-KOK-ahl] disease causes many illnesses that affect both children and adults, including pneumonia [new-MOH-nee-uh], bloodstream infections, meningitis [men-in-JY-tus], and sinus infections.

Pneumococcal disease is caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, which can spread through person-to-person contact with respiratory secretions, like saliva or mucus. Many people, especially children, have the bacteria in their nose or throat at one time or another without being ill.

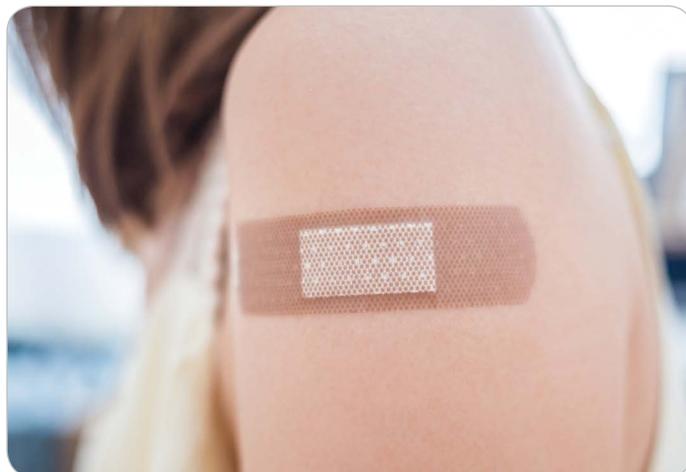
The pneumococcal vaccine [vak-SEEN] can prevent pneumococcal disease and protect you and your child from serious illness.

What are the types of pneumococcal vaccines?

There are two types of pneumococcal vaccines, and you may need one or both. Ask your provider which is best for you. You should not receive both at the same time.

The **pneumococcal conjugate** [CON-joo-gate] vaccine (PCV13) protects against 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria and is recommended for:

- All children younger than 2 years old
- All adults 65 years or older
- Children and adults 2 to 64 years old who have chronic lung, kidney, heart, or liver disease, sickle cell disease, diabetes, kidney disorders, HIV infection, or other illnesses that compromise their immune systems
- Children and adults 2 to 64 years old who have cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks or cochlear (ear) implants



The **pneumococcal polysaccharide** [pahl-ee-SAK-ah-ride] vaccine (PPSV23) protects against 23 types of pneumococcal bacteria and is recommended for:

- Children and adults 2 to 64 years old with certain illnesses or conditions (see PCV13 vaccine above), cochlear implants, or CSF leaks
- All adults 65 years or older
- Adults 19 to 64 years old who smoke

Who should not get the vaccine?

You should not get the PCV13 vaccine if you:

- Are not feeling well
- Have had a severe allergy to the PCV13 vaccine or a vaccine that contains diphtheria toxoid (like the DTaP vaccine)

You should not get the PPSV23 vaccine if you:

- Are pregnant (the CDC advises getting the vaccine before becoming pregnant)
- Are not feeling well
- Have had a severe allergy to the PPSV23 vaccine or are allergic to any part of the vaccine (ask a doctor about the ingredients)

Children younger than 2 years old should not get the PPSV23 vaccine.

What are the risks of the pneumococcal vaccines?

You or your child may have mild side effects after receiving the **PCV13 vaccine**, including:

- Pain, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- Headache
- Fever and chills
- Tiredness
- Irritability
- Loss of appetite

If a young child gets the PCV13 vaccine at the same time as a flu vaccine, they may have an increased risk for seizures caused by fever. Ask your child's doctor for more information.

Possible side effects of the **PPSV23 vaccine** may include:

- Pain, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- Muscle aches
- Fever

These side effects usually go away within 2 days (if they occur).

Risks of getting any vaccine may include dizziness, ringing in the ears, vision changes, and severe pain in the arm where the shot was given.

It is rare to have a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine (about 1 in a million doses). In very rare cases, vaccines can cause a serious injury or death.

How well do the vaccines work?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found that at least 1 dose of the PCV13 vaccines protects:

- 8 in 10 babies from serious pneumococcal infections (called invasive pneumococcal disease)
- 45 in 100 adults 65 years or older from pneumococcal pneumonia
- 75 in 100 adults 65 years or older from invasive pneumococcal disease

Where do I get the vaccine?

Your child should get the PCV13 vaccine as part of their routine childhood immunizations. They can receive this at their healthcare provider's office, a community health clinic, or your local health department.

Adults can often get the vaccine at their healthcare provider's office or at a pharmacy, local health department, or community health clinic.

Once you or your child receive the vaccine, ask the healthcare provider to record it in the state or local registry so other healthcare providers know which vaccines you have already received.

How do I pay for the vaccine?

Medicare Part B and most private health insurance companies cover pneumococcal vaccines for children and adults.

Your child may also be eligible for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program if you cannot afford the vaccines. Ask their healthcare provider for more information.

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