



Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine

What is invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD)?

- IPD is a bacterial infection caused by a type of bacteria called streptococcus pneumonia (or pneumococcus). This type of bacteria can cause any of the following:
 - otitis media (ear infection),
 - pneumonia (lung infection),
 - bacteremia (blood infection), or
 - meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord).
- Pneumonia, bacteremia, and meningitis can lead to long-lasting complications such as deafness, especially in people with high-risk medical conditions or even death.
- Sometimes antibiotics do not work because of antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance occurs when drugs used to treat the infection are no longer effective. When there is antibiotic resistance, it is more difficult to treat the infection.

How do you get invasive pneumococcal disease?

- The bacteria is spread through droplets in the air from coughing or sneezing. It can also spread from person to person through direct contact with the respiratory secretions of an infected person, such as through kissing. Bacteria can also spread through saliva when common items are shared such as beverages, eating utensils, or young children chewing on toys.

- The bacteria that can cause IPD live at the back of the nose and throat without causing symptoms in people of all ages, but children are the most frequent carriers.

Why is the pneumococcal vaccine important?

- Streptococcus pneumonia is the most common cause of bacterial infection in children under 2 years of age. This vaccine can prevent pneumonia, bacteremia, and meningitis caused by this bacterium in young children.

Who should get the vaccine?

- Starting at 2 months of age, and until the age of 5, the Prevnar®13 vaccine is a part of the routine publicly funded schedule in Ontario for children. Children starting their series at 2 months of age should receive 3 doses at 2, 4, and 12 months of age. Children starting this immunization series at another time will have an altered schedule.
- Some high-risk medical conditions would warrant a child receiving an additional dose of pneumococcal vaccine in childhood. Speak to your healthcare provider about this if you feel that your child has a high-risk medical condition.

Are there side effects from the vaccine?

- Most reactions are mild and include soreness, redness, itching and/or rash where the needle was given. Decreased appetite, irritability, drowsiness, change in sleep pattern, diarrhea and vomiting are common side effects.

- If an allergic reaction occurs (hives, swelling, and difficulty breathing) seek medical attention immediately. Serious reactions are very rare.
- Please report any serious vaccine reactions to your healthcare provider.

Who should not get the vaccine?

- Children and adults should not get the vaccine if they are allergic to any of the vaccine components including diphtheria toxoid or if they have had an anaphylactic reaction to a prior dose of this vaccine.

Who should I talk to if I have more questions?

For more information, please contact your healthcare provider or your local public health unit.



For any questions, contact Grey Bruce Public Health:
519-376-9420, press '2' or 1-800-263-3456, press '2'
www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

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