

The Vaccine

Pneumococcal vaccine consists of purified tiny pieces from the outside of the Pneumococcus bacteria. It cannot give you pneumonia.

The current vaccine provides protection against 23 of the most important strains of Pneumococcus. It protects most people from getting sick.

The vaccine is given as a single needle, usually in the arm.

The pneumococcal vaccine is not the same as the "flu shot". However, you can get this vaccine at the same time.

If you have any questions or concerns about the vaccine after reading this pamphlet, talk to your nurse or doctor. You should only get the needle if you think it's right for you.

**Pneumococcal vaccine
has been recommended by the
National Advisory Committee
on Immunization in Canada
for everyone 65 years of age
or older and for adults and
children with chronic
medical conditions.**

Where can I get more information?

Call your local health centre, public health unit or medical clinic and talk to your nurse/doctor.

You can also find information on these Internet sites:

Department of Health and Social Services
www.hltthss.gov.nt.ca

Tele-Care, NWT
Toll Free - 1-888-255-1010

For more information
please contact your local
health centre.

September 2004

Pneumococcal Pneumonia Vaccine



What is pneumonia?

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs. People who get it, may have to be treated in a hospital. Pneumonia occurs more often in the elderly and in people with conditions that weaken the lungs or immune system.

What causes pneumonia?

Many germs cause pneumonia. About seventy percent are caused by a germ called *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (also referred to as “Pneumococcus”).

How is pneumonia treated?

Pneumonia can usually be treated with antibiotics. However, many bacteria are now becoming resistant to antibiotics. In many parts of the world, “Pneumococcus” has now become resistant to commonly used antibiotics and this problem has been spreading fast.

How can I reduce the risk of getting pneumonia?

You can reduce your risk by:

- Getting vaccinated against *Pneumococcus* bacteria;
- Not smoking; and
- Eating healthy food and staying physically fit.

Call your nurse or doctor if you have a bad chest infection, particularly if it has lasted for more than a week.

What are the needle's side effects?

You may have a sore arm for a day or two. Some people have a low-grade fever that goes away the next day. Rarely, someone may have a serious allergic reaction. Talk to your nurse if you are worried about your risk of having allergies.

Is there anyone who should not receive this vaccine?

Any person who has had a serious allergic reaction to pneumococcal vaccine should not get it again.

Why are we recommending this vaccine to you?

Pneumococcal vaccine has been recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization in Canada for everyone 65 years of age or older and for adults and children with chronic medical conditions.

The pneumococcal vaccine is not the same as the “flu shot”. You can get this vaccine at the same time.

