

# Important Information about Pneumonia and Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine\*

## PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY

### What is PNEUMOCOCCAL PNEUMONIA?

- It is a bacterial infection of the lungs.
- It is more common during the winter months.
- It causes fever, chills, cough, soreness in the chest and back.
- Some people may develop a serious illness and require hospitalization.
- The bacteria spreads from person to person from secretions from the mouth and nose.

### What is the Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine?

- The vaccine is given by injection.
- The vaccine will begin to provide its protective effect after about 2 to 3 weeks.
- The vaccine is very effective in preventing 23 of the most common types of pneumonia.
- The current recommendation is to be immunized only once. For certain people, re-vaccination is required. Ask your health care provider.

### Who Should Receive the Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine?

- All persons 2 years of age or older with any of these conditions:
  - Cancer
  - Chronic cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) leak
  - Chronic liver disease
  - Chronic lung disease (not asthma)
  - Chronic neurological conditions that may impair clearance of oral secretions
  - Chronic renal disease
  - Cochlear implant
  - Congenital immunodeficiency
  - Cystic fibrosis
  - Diabetes
  - Heart disease
  - Hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT)
  - HIV
  - Homelessness
  - Immunosuppressive therapy
  - Illicit drug use or alcoholism
  - Solid organ transplant
  - Splenic disorders, including Sickle cell disease or other hemoglobinopathies
- All persons 65 years or older.
- All residents of long-term care facilities.

## CAUTION

### Who Should NOT Receive This Vaccine?

- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose or any component of pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine.
- Children less than 2 years of age.
- People who are sick or have a fever (temperature of 39.5°C/103°F or greater).

### What to Expect Following Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine

*People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any vaccine there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.*

Possible side effects from the vaccine are usually mild. They include:

- Soreness at the site of injection lasting 1 to 2 days.
- Occasionally fever for 1 to 2 days.

*As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. These medications should not be taken if you have certain medical conditions. Talk to your health care provider about your medical history before using either of these medications.*

### Questions:

If you have any questions regarding pneumonia or the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine, please call your local Public Health Office, or your health care provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the websites of

- Immunize Canada at [immunize.ca/en/default.aspx](http://immunize.ca/en/default.aspx)
- the Public Health Agency of Canada at [phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://phac-aspc.gc.ca)
- 811 at <https://811.novascotia.ca/>

*\*Note: there are two types of pneumococcal vaccines. Pneumococcal polysaccharide is primarily for adults over 65 years of age and for certain high-risk conditions. Pneumococcal conjugate is primarily for infants and for some adults and children with high-risk conditions.*