



Patient Education Sheet

Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine

What is Pneumococcal Disease?

Pneumococcal disease is caused by *Streptococcus Pneumoniae* bacteria. It is a leading cause of vaccine-preventable illness and death in the United States. Anyone can get pneumococcal disease, but some people are at greater risk than others:

- People 65 years and older
- The very young
- People with certain health problems
- People with a weakened immune system
- Smokers

Pneumococcal disease can lead to serious infections of the:

- Lungs (pneumonia)
- Blood (bacteremia)
- Covering of the brain (meningitis)

Pneumococcal pneumonia kills about 1 out of 20 people who get it. Bacteremia kills about 1 person in 5, and meningitis kills about 3 people in 10.

Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPSV)

Treatment of pneumococcal infections with penicillin and other drugs used to be more effective. But some strains of the disease have become unaffected by these drugs. This makes prevention of the disease, through vaccination, even more important.

Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV) protects against 23 types of pneumococcal bacteria, including those most likely to cause serious disease.

Most healthy adults who get the vaccine develop protection to most or all of these types within 2 to 3 weeks of getting the shot. Very old people, children under 2 years of age, and people with some long-term illnesses might not respond as well, or at all.

Another type of pneumococcal vaccine (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, or PCV) is routinely recommended for children younger than 5 years of age.

Who should get the PPSV while in the hospital?

Patients ages 18 years and older on any adult medical or surgical patient care unit with no or unknown history of prior receipt of this vaccine should be vaccinated while in the hospital.

Children ages 5 years to 18 years of age with no or unknown history of prior receipt of the pneumonia vaccination with any of the following high risk conditions should be vaccinated while in the hospital:

- Diabetes

- ESRD (end stage renal disease)
- Congestive Heart Failure
- Asplenia (no or not fully developed spleen)
- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)

Who should wait or not get the vaccine?

Anyone who has had a life-threatening allergic reaction to PPSV should not get another dose.

Anyone who has a severe allergy to any part of the vaccine should not get the vaccine. Tell your doctor if you have any severe allergies.

There is no evidence that PPSV is harmful to either a pregnant woman or her fetus, but consult the doctor before getting vaccinated. Women who are at high risk of pneumococcal disease should be vaccinated before becoming pregnant, if possible.

What are the risks from PPSV?

About half of the people who get PPSV have mild side effects, such as redness or pain where the shot is given.

Less than 1% develop a fever, muscle aches, or more severe local reactions.

A vaccine, like any medicine, could cause a serious reaction. But the risk of a vaccine causing serious harm is very small.

What if there is a severe reaction?

What should I look for?

- Any unusual condition, such as high fever or behavior changes.
- Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

What should I do?

- Call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away or call 911.
- Tell the doctor what happened, and when the vaccination was given.

Source:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/vaccines

State of Connecticut Public Health Code
 Sec. 19a-490k Vaccinations for hospital patients regulations.

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/BiologicsBloodVaccines/Vaccines/ApprovedProducts/UCM195479.pdf>