

## Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV 13) Vaccine

**Keep your child safe.  
Get all vaccines on time.**

By getting all the vaccines on time, your child can be protected from many diseases over a lifetime.

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

### What is the PCV 13 vaccine?

The PCV 13 vaccine protects against 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria. The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

The PCV 13 vaccine is provided free as part of your child's routine immunizations. Call your health care provider to make an appointment.

### Who should get the PCV 13 vaccine?

The PCV 13 vaccine is given to babies as a series of 3 doses. The first dose is given at 2 months of age, the second at 4 months, and the third at 12 months. The vaccine is given at the same time as other childhood immunizations.

PCV 13 Vaccine	Child's Age at Immunization
1 <sup>st</sup> dose	2 months
2 <sup>nd</sup> dose	4 months
3 <sup>rd</sup> dose	12 months

An extra dose of vaccine is given at 6 months of age to children who have:

- No spleen, or a spleen that is not working properly
- Sickle-cell disease
- An immune system weakened by disease or medical treatment

- Chronic liver disease, including cirrhosis, chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C
- Chronic kidney, heart or lung disease
- An islet cell or solid organ transplant, or a cochlear (inner ear) implant, or are waiting for one
- Had a stem cell transplant
- A chronic neurological condition that makes it hard to clear fluids from the mouth or throat
- Diabetes, cystic fibrosis or a chronic cerebrospinal fluid leak

At 2 years of age, a child with any of the above medical conditions should also receive a dose of pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine, which protects against more types of pneumococcal bacteria. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #62b Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine](#).

Some people 5 years of age and older with certain medical conditions are at high risk of pneumococcal disease. The PCV13 vaccine is provided free to:

- Children 5 to 18 years of age with no spleen, or a spleen that is not working properly
- Adults and children 5 years of age and older with HIV infection or who have had a stem cell transplant.

These individuals should also get a dose of pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine after their last dose of PCV13. Speak with your health care provider for information on the number of doses of vaccine you require and when you should get them.

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

### What are the benefits of the PCV 13 vaccine?

The PCV 13 vaccine is the best way to protect against pneumococcal disease, a serious and sometimes fatal

disease. When you get immunized, you help protect others as well.

## What are the possible reactions after the PCV 13 vaccine?

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get pneumococcal disease.

Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, redness and swelling where the vaccine was given. Some may also have fever, drowsiness, crankiness, loss of appetite, headache, muscle or joint ache, vomiting, diarrhea or a rash. These reactions are mild and generally last 1 to 2 days.

Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen\* (e.g. Advil®) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

\*Ibuprofen should not be given to children under 6 months of age without first speaking to your health care provider.

For more information on Reye Syndrome, see [HealthLinkBC File #84 Reye Syndrome](#).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility, less than 1 in a million, of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. Should this reaction occur, your health care provider is prepared to treat it. Emergency treatment includes administration of epinephrine (adrenaline) and transfer by ambulance to the nearest emergency department. If symptoms develop after you leave the clinic, call **9-1-1** or the local emergency number.

It is important to always report serious or unexpected reactions to your health care provider.

## Who should not get the PCV 13 vaccine?

Speak with your health care provider if you or your child has had a life-threatening reaction to a previous

dose of pneumococcal vaccine, or to any component of the vaccine.

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. However, if you have concerns, speak with your health care provider.

## What is pneumococcal infection?

Pneumococcal infection is caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria. The bacteria can cause serious and life-threatening infections such as meningitis, an infection of the lining that covers the brain, septicemia, an infection of the blood, and pneumonia, an infection of the lungs. Permanent complications of meningitis include brain damage and deafness. For every 4 children who get sick with pneumococcal meningitis, 1 may die.

Pneumococcal infection is spread from one person to another by coughing, sneezing or close face-to-face contact. It can also be spread through saliva when people share food or drinks. Babies and children can become sick through sharing soothers, bottles or toys used by other children.

Pneumococcal disease is now rare among children in B.C. because of routine childhood immunization programs.

## Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents or guardians and their children discuss consent for immunization. Children under the age of 19, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risk of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations. For more information on mature minor consent see [HealthLinkBC File #119 The Infants Act, Mature Minor Consent and Immunization](#).

## For More Information

For more information on immunizations, visit ImmunizeBC at <https://immunizebc.ca/>.



ImmunizeBC



BC Centre for Disease Control  
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority