Pneumococcal Vaccination
Recommendations for Adults

- Everyone age 65 years and older
- Adults age 19-64 years with any of the following conditions:
  - Chronic illnesses, such as lung, heart, liver or kidney disease; asthma; diabetes or alcoholism
  - Conditions that weaken the immune system, such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, damaged/absent spleen; on steroids or other immunosuppressive therapy
  - Cochlear implants or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks
- Adults age 19-64 years who smoke
- Adults who reside in chronic-care or long-term care facilities

Pneumococcal Vaccination
Recommendations for Children

- All infants should receive the pneumococcal vaccination series at ages 2, 4, 6 and 12-15 months
- Children and adolescents age 2 years and older need an additional vaccine if they have any of the following conditions:
  - Lung, heart, liver, or kidney disease; asthma; diabetes or sickle cell disease
  - Conditions that weaken the immune system, such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, damaged or absent spleen
  - Cochlear implants or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks
  - Children who reside in chronic-care or long-term care facilities

Preventing Pneumococcal Disease and Vaccination Recommendations

Why immunization is especially important during influenza season

Pneumococcal disease is an infection that can cause serious illness and death throughout the year. Since pneumococcal infection is a common complication of influenza it is critical that at-risk individuals are protected against both diseases as influenza season approaches.

Pneumococcal infection causes bacteremia (sepsis), meningitis, pneumonia, and other less serious illnesses such as otitis media (infection of the ear) and sinusitis. Infants and adults age 65 years and older, as well as individuals with chronic health conditions, are more likely than others to be seriously affected by pneumococcal disease.

Routine vaccination of infants and toddlers in the U.S. started in 2000. Immunization rates in this population remain high and incidence of pneumococcal disease has been reduced dramatically in children. Another benefit of the high immunization rates in children has been a steep decline in transmission of cases to adults, but adults still bear the largest burden of pneumococcal disease in the U.S. About 85 percent of severe cases occur in individuals age 18 and older.\(^1\)

A visit to a healthcare professional for a seasonal influenza vaccination provides adults with a good opportunity to ask about pneumococcal vaccination.
Pneumococcal Vaccination:

- Protects against serious infections (the most serious are bacteremia and meningitis); others include pneumonia and otitis media (in children).
- Can be given any time of year.
- Can be given during the same visit as influenza vaccine (note: children younger than 6 months cannot get influenza vaccine).
- Is associated with improved survival, reduced chances of respiratory failure or other complications, and shorter in-patient stays for adults hospitalized with community-acquired pneumonia, including pneumococcal disease.\(^2\)
- Is fully reimbursable for adults on Medicare Part B (no co-pay, no deductible).

Pneumococcal Vaccine Types:

- There are two types of pneumococcal vaccines—pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) and pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23).
- **Conjugate** vaccine is recommended for all infants.
  - It is also recommended for immunocompromised adults age 19 years and older (in addition to PPSV23).
- **Polysaccharide** vaccine is recommended for all adults age 65 and older.
  - It is also recommended for adults age 19-64 years who smoke or have certain chronic health conditions, and recommended for children age 2 years and older with certain chronic conditions.
- The polysaccharide vaccine is manufactured by Merck & Co., Inc.
- The conjugate vaccine is manufactured by Pfizer Inc.

Adults with any of the following are recommended to receive both vaccines (initially the PCV13, then later the PPSV23): immunocompromising conditions (e.g., HIV/AIDS, leukemia, lymphoma, and Hodgkin’s disease); immunosuppressive treatment; a damaged or missing spleen; cochlear implants; or CSF leaks.

Other adults who are recommended for pneumococcal vaccination only need the polysaccharide vaccine, but may need more than one dose. A healthcare professional will be able to provide more information for adults based on their specific risk factors.

Vaccine Safety:

- Either vaccine may cause some local reaction or soreness around the site of the injection; however, these reactions are usually minor and subside within a few days.
- In children, PCV may cause mild fever, fussiness, and decreased appetite.

References


September 2013