

# Pneumococcal Conjugate 15 Vaccine

Vaccines have saved more lives compared to any other medical intervention. Vaccines help the immune system recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause serious diseases.

## Some pneumococcal diseases are vaccine preventable.

- **Pneumococcal diseases** are caused by different types of *Streptococci pneumoniae* ('strep') bacteria and cause many deaths worldwide.
- Pneumococcal diseases are most common in young children, the elderly and persons who have certain underlying medical conditions or lifestyles.
- These bacteria can cause ear and sinus infections, bronchitis, serious and life-threatening infections of the lungs (pneumonia), blood (bacteremia) and the lining that covers the brain (meningitis) or death may occur.
- Permanent complications include brain damage and deafness.

## How are pneumococcal bacteria spread?

- Pneumococcal bacteria are spread directly from one person to another through coughing, sneezing, in saliva when kissing, through sharing drinks, or close face-to-face contact.
- Babies and children can become sick by using soothers, bottles or toys that are used by other children.
- People can pick up the bacteria if they touch surfaces that have the bacteria on them.
- Many people carry pneumococcal bacteria in their nose and throat but do not become sick.
- Children who attend childcare centres are **2 to 3 times** more likely to develop pneumococcal disease and ear infections than children who don't attend childcare centres.

## How can pneumococcal disease be prevented?

- Be immunized. When your child is immunized, they help protect others as well.
- Practice good hygiene (e.g., handwashing).
- Encourage your child to cover their mouth when coughing and their nose and mouth when sneezing to prevent direct contact with droplets from the nose or throat.

## Important to know:

- This vaccine provides protection against 15 common pneumococcal strains. It does not protect against other pneumococcal bacteria strains.

## Who can get this vaccine for free?

- Children starting at 2 months through 4 years of age.
- **It is very important to start your child's immunizations on time for the best protection against pneumococcal disease.**

Dose	Child's Age
1	2 months
2	4 months
3	12 months

## Who should not get this vaccine?

- Children who have a serious acute illness, with or without a fever should delay immunizations.
- Children who had a serious or life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of any pneumococcal vaccine, or any components of the vaccine.

## What are common reactions to this vaccine?

- **Vaccines are very safe and effective. It is much safer to get this vaccine than to get pneumococcal disease.**
- Pain, swelling, redness, tenderness and itching where the needle was given.
- Fever, irritability, tiredness headache, muscle aches, decreased appetite, generalized rash.
- These mild reactions generally last 1 to 2 days.
- Only treat a fever (at least 6 to 8 hours after immunization) **if** your child is uncomfortable, refusing fluids and not sleeping.

Use **Acetaminophen** (all ages; Tylenol®, Tempra®) or **Ibuprofen (6 months and older; Advil®, Motrin®)** to treat fevers and pain. **Never give ASA (Aspirin®)** to children younger than 18 years of age because of the serious risk of Reye's Syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips.

This reaction can be treated and occurs in less than one in one million people who get the vaccine. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, get medical attention or call 911 right away.**

### Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, nurse practitioner or call 811 as soon as possible.

### Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If your child had to go to a doctor, a hospital or to a health centre with a symptom that might be related to immunization.

### What does this vaccine contain?

**VAXNEUVANCE®** contains 15 *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacterial serotypes (1, 3, 4, 5, 6A, 6B, 7F, 9V, 14, 18C, 19A, 19F, 22F, 23F, and 33F) on a CRM<sub>197</sub> carrier protein, aluminum phosphate, L-histidine, polysorbate 20, sodium chloride and water for injection. Preservative -free. Latex-free.

Provincial immunization fact sheets are available at [www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize).

**For more information, contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner, HealthLine online or by calling 811.**

**References:** [Canadian Immunization Guide](#). VAXNEUVANCE® product monograph (2023).