

Pneumococcal Conjugate 13 Vaccine

Vaccines have saved more lives in Canada in the last 60 years than any other medical intervention. Vaccines help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause diseases.

Some pneumococcal diseases are vaccine preventable.

- **Pneumococcal disease** is caused by different types of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* ('strep') bacteria.
- These bacteria can cause ear infections, sinus infections or bronchitis.
- They can cause serious and life-threatening infections of the lungs (pneumonia), of the blood (bacteremia) and the lining that covers the brain (meningitis).
- Permanent complications include brain damage and deafness.
- For every 100 people who get pneumococcal disease, up to 7 could die.
- People with certain medical conditions have a high risk of having pneumococcal disease.

How are pneumococcal bacteria spread?

- Pneumococcal bacteria are spread directly from one person to another through coughing, sneezing or close face-to-face contact.
- People can pick up the bacteria if they touch surfaces that have the bacteria on them.
- The bacteria can be spread through saliva (spit) when people share things like food and drinks.
- Babies and children can become sick by using soothers, bottles or toys that are used by other children.
- Children younger than 5 years old who attend child care centers are **2 to 3 times** more likely to develop pneumococcal disease and ear infections than children who don't attend child care centres.

How can pneumococcal disease be prevented?

- Be immunized. When you and your child are immunized, you help protect others as well.
- Practice good hygiene (e.g. handwashing).

Who can get this vaccine for free?

- Children between the ages of 2 months through 59 months of age.
- Select individuals 5 years and older who are considered medically high risk of pneumococcal infection may qualify to receive the vaccine. Check with a health care provider for more information.

Who should not get this vaccine?

- Persons who have a serious illness, with or without a fever should delay immunizations.
- People who had a 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.**
- Temporary soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site.
- Fever, irritability, tiredness, headache and loss of appetite.
- 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.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Tempra) may be given for fever or soreness. ASA (Aspirin) must NOT be given to anyone younger than 18 years old because of the risk of Reye 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.

If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number. This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in one million people who get the vaccine.

Who should you report reactions to?

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

Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about you or your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If you or 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?

Pevnar® 13 vaccine contains 13 pneumococcal serotypes known to cause invasive pneumococcal disease. It also contains CRM197 carrier protein, sodium chloride, polysorbate 80, succinic acid and aluminum as aluminum phosphate adjuvant. Thimerosal-free. Latex-free.

Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents/guardians discuss consent for immunization with their children. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for immunizations. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

Provincial immunization fact sheets are available at www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize.

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

References: Pevnar® 13 Product monograph (2019).