

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 vaccine is free as part of your child's routine immunizations. Speak with your health care provider to make an appointment.

Who should get the PCV 13 vaccine?

Babies receive the vaccine as a series of 3 doses at 2, 4 and 12 months of age.

They receive an extra dose of vaccine at 6 months of age if they have any of the following medical conditions:

- 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

A child with any of these conditions should receive a dose of the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine at 2 years of age. The polysaccharide vaccine protects against more types of pneumococcal bacteria. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #62b Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine](#).

The PCV 13 vaccine is also free for:

- Children 5 to 18 years of age with no spleen, or a spleen that is not working properly, or who have cancer
- Individuals 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 PCV 13. Speak with your health care provider for more information.

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

What are the benefits of the PCV 13 vaccine?

The PCV 13 vaccine protects against pneumococcal infection, 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 include soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site. Some people may have fever, headache, muscle or joint ache, loss of appetite, changes to sleep patterns, crankiness, vomiting, diarrhea or

a rash. These reactions are mild and generally go away in 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, please visit [HealthLinkBC File #84 Reye syndrome](#).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine. There is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This happens in less than 1 in a million people who get the vaccine. Symptoms may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. If this reaction occurs, 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.

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 any part of the vaccine.

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. 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 of the lining that covers the brain (meningitis), the blood (septicemia) and the lungs (pneumonia). Permanent complications of meningitis include brain damage and deafness. For every 20 cases of pneumococcal meningitis, up to 5 people will die.

Pneumococcal infection is spread from one person to another by coughing, sneezing, close face-to-face contact and through saliva. Babies and children can get sick by sharing soothers, bottles, or toys with 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](#).



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/more/resources/healthlink-bc-files or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.