

Pneumococcal Disease

What is pneumococcal disease?

Pneumococcus is spread by airborne droplets and is a leading cause of serious illness, including bacteremia, meningitis, and pneumonia among children and adults worldwide. Pneumococcal disease is a term used for a wide range of infections caused by bacteria called *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (pneumococcus), including:

- Ear infections
- Sinus infections
- Pneumonia (lung infection)
- Bacteremia (bloodstream infection)
- Meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord)
- Sepsis (the body's extreme response to an infection)

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms depend on the part of the body the bacteria are affecting. For sinus and ear infections, symptoms are usually relatively mild, such as:

- Cough
- Ear pain
- Fever
- Sore throat

For pneumonia, bloodstream infections, meningitis, and sepsis, you can also have more severe symptoms, including:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Rapid or difficult breathing
- Chest pain
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Increased pain when looking at bright lights
- Confusion or low alertness

How does pneumococcal disease spread?

Pneumococcal bacteria spread from person to person through coughing, sneezing, and close contact. People can carry the bacteria in their nose and throat without being sick and spread the bacteria to others.

Where can I find more information?

- Ask your doctor, or your local county health department
- Email the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at immunization@adph.state.al.us.
- Go to [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and type ' pneumococcal disease' in the SEARCH box.



Pneumococcal Vaccine

Who should get pneumococcal vaccine?

Two kinds of pneumococcal vaccines (PCV and PPSV) are used in the United States help protect against pneumococcal disease and these vaccines protect against many, but not all types of pneumococcal bacteria. Children under 2 years old, people with certain medical conditions or other risk factors, and adults 65 years or older are at the highest risk. Different vaccines are recommended for different people based on their age, medical status, and previous vaccination history.

Children (Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine PCV13, PCV15 and Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine PPSV23, or PCV20)

Infants and young children need 4 doses of PCV usually at 2,4,6, and 12-16 months of age. Older children and adolescents might need PCV depending on age and medical conditions or other risk factors if they did not receive the recommended doses as infants or children.

Please refer to <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/downloads/resolutions/06-23-2-pneumo-508.pdf> for ACIP recommended vaccine schedule and dosage intervals.

- Either PCV15 or PCV20 may be used for the full series or to complete recommended schedule begun with PCV13.
- Minimum interval between doses is 8 weeks except for children vaccinated at age <1 year for whom minimum interval between doses is 4 weeks.
- PPSV23 is recommended for anyone 2 years or older with certain medical conditions.

Adults (Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine PCV15 and PPSV23 or PCV20)

Adults 19 through 64 years old with certain medical conditions or other risk factors and adults 65 years or older who have not already received a pneumococcal conjugate vaccine should receive either:

- a single dose of PCV15 followed by a dose of PPSV23, OR a single dose of PCV20.

What are the vaccine side effects and risks?

Most side effects are mild, meaning they do not affect daily activities. If these problems occur, they usually go away within about 2 days. Mild problems following injection can include:

- Redness, swelling, pain or tenderness at injection site
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Fussiness (irritability)
- Headache
- Feeling tired
- Muscle aches or joint pain
- Chills

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