



# **Pneumococcal Polysaccharide (Pneumovax®23) Vaccine**

## **What is it?**

Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine protects you from bacteria called *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (pneumococcus). These bacteria can cause infections in the blood, brain, spinal cord, lungs, sinuses and middle ear. Severe infections can cause death. (For more information, see Facts About...Pneumococcal Diseases).

## **How effective is the vaccine?**

For healthy adults, the vaccine is more than 80% effective at preventing serious pneumococcal diseases.

Among the elderly and high-risk groups, the vaccine is estimated to be 50-80% effective at preventing serious illness. Some people with a chronic illness may need to get the vaccine more than once.

## **Who should get the vaccine?**

The following people can receive the Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine for free:

- All adults aged 65 years and older.
- High-risk clients can be immunized for free by their health care provider. Please refer to high risk criteria in the Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule for Ontario.

## **What is the schedule for the vaccine?**

Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine is routinely given at 65 years of age or older.

Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine should be given 8 weeks apart from the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine.

## **Are there side effects with the vaccine?**

Side effects are usually mild and last a short time, the most common side effects are redness, pain and swelling where the needle was given.

If you think a serious reaction is developing, seek medical attention right away. Any unusual or significant changes in your health or your child's health after the immunization should be reported to a health care provider and the Health Department.



## Who should NOT get the vaccine?

Children under 2 years of age (see Facts About - Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine)

Individuals who have a severe allergy (anaphylaxis) to any previous vaccine(s) or to any component of the vaccine.

## Don't forget to update your immunization record!

After you receive a vaccine, update your immunization record (yellow card). Keep your records in a safe place.

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905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | [durham.ca/health](https://durham.ca/health)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

