

PNEUMOCOCCAL PNEUMONIA

General Information

PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE

- Pneumococcal disease is caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, also called pneumococcus.
- Pneumococcus can cause many types of infections; some may lead to severe illness or death.
- Pneumococcus is one of the most common causes of severe pneumonia.
- People at high risk for pneumococcal disease include:
 - ▶ Adults age 65 years or older.
 - ▶ Persons with certain chronic illnesses or conditions.
 - ▶ Smokers.
 - ▶ Very young children.

PNEUMONIA

- Is an infection of one or both lungs from bacteria, viruses, fungi or even a parasite.
- Signs include fever, chills, coughing, fatigue, rapid breathing, and shortness of breath or chest pain.
- Pneumonia caused by pneumococcus is called pneumococcal pneumonia.

PNEUMOCOCCAL PNEUMONIA

- Is the most common type of pneumococcal disease in adults.
- Occurs in about 175,000 Americans each year.
- Causes thousands hospitalizations and over 10,000 deaths each year in the U. S.

HOW PNEUMOCOCCAL PNEUMONIA SPREADS

- When a person with pneumococcal pneumonia sneezes, coughs, talks, or laughs, pneumococcal bacteria can spread into the air as droplets.
- The droplets can spread to people and on surfaces within 6 feet.
- Pneumococcal bacteria can spread to your hands if you touch anything that has pneumococcal bacteria on it. If you then touch your eyes, nose or mouth, you might get the bacteria in your system which could cause you to get an infection from it.
- People living close together can get pneumococcal pneumonia or it can happen during or after a stay in a healthcare facility.

TREATMENT FOR PNEUMOCOCCAL PNEUMONIA

- Follow treatment as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Your health care provider may prescribe antibiotics. Always finish antibiotics.
- Some people can be treated at home, but many people will need treatment in a hospital.

HOW TO PREVENT PNEUMOCOCCAL INFECTIONS

- Getting a pneumococcal vaccination (shot) is the best way to prevent severe infection due to pneumococcus.
- Ask your healthcare provider about whether you should get a pneumococcal vaccination, and if so, which vaccine you should receive (see: Pneumococcal Vaccine below).
- Having the flu increases your chances of getting pneumococcal pneumonia. Get a flu shot every year.
- Avoid people who have flu or pneumonia.
- Clean hands often.
- Keep hands away from your face, eyes, and mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home when sick and limit contact with other people.



PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINE

There are 2 types of pneumococcal vaccine. Ask your healthcare provider about your options based on your age, medical conditions, and any past vaccinations. Some people are recommended to receive both PCV13 and PPSV23 vaccines, and others need only PPSV23.

PNEUMOCOCCAL CONJUGATE VACCINE (PCV13)

- Protects against 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria.
- One-time dose for adults age 19 years or older who have:
 - ▶ Cerebro-spinal fluid leaks.
 - ▶ Cochlear implants.
 - ▶ Sickle cell disease or other red blood cell disorders.
 - ▶ Had their spleen removed or were born without a spleen.
 - ▶ Medical conditions that weaken the immune system such as HIV infection, chronic kidney disease, leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, or some cancers.
 - ▶ Had an organ transplant or are taking chemotherapy, long-term steroids, or radiation therapy.
- People who receive a PCV 13 vaccination also need one or more PPSV23 vaccinations, but others are recommended the PPSV23 vaccine only.

Keep up to date with all vaccinations. Review your records with your health care providers.

PNEUMOCOCCAL POLYSACCHARIDE VACCINE (PPSV23)

- Protects against 23 types of pneumococcal bacteria.
- Is not a yearly vaccination, but depending on age and medical conditions, some people may need 2 or 3 PPSV23 vaccinations in their lifetime.
- Recommended for all adults age 65 years or older.
- Also recommended for adults age 19 through 64 years who have:
 - ▶ Chronic heart, kidney, lung, or liver disease, or who smoke cigarettes, or abuse alcohol.
 - ▶ Diabetes.
 - ▶ Cerebro-spinal fluid leaks.
 - ▶ Cochlear implants.
 - ▶ Sickle cell disease or other red blood cell disorders.
 - ▶ Had their spleen removed or were born without a spleen.
 - ▶ Medical conditions that weaken the immune system such as HIV infection, leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, or some cancers.
 - ▶ Had an organ transplant or are taking chemotherapy, long-term steroids, or radiation therapy.

LEARN MORE AT:

www.publichealth.va.gov

www.cdc.gov/pneumococcal/

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/current-vis.html

www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/pneumonia/Pages/default.aspx



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