



# St. Vincent Physician Network

## **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine**

### ***What Parents Need to Know***

from [www.kidsgrowth.com](http://www.kidsgrowth.com)

#### **Why get vaccinated?**

Pneumococcal disease is a serious disease that causes sickness and death. In fact, pneumococcal disease is responsible for about 200 deaths each year among children under 5 years old.

Pneumococcal disease is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in the United States. (Meningitis is an infection of the covering of the brain). Each year pneumococcal disease causes many health problems in children under 5, including:

- over 700 cases of meningitis,
- 17,000 blood infections, and
- about 5 million ear infections.

Children under 2 years old are at highest risk for serious disease. Pneumococcus bacteria are spread from person to person through close contact.

Pneumococcal infections can be hard to treat because the disease has become resistant to some of the drugs that have been used to treat it. This makes prevention of the disease even more important. Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine can prevent pneumococcal disease.

#### **Pneumococcal Vaccine**

Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine is licensed for infants and toddlers. It is good at preventing pneumococcal disease among these children, and also helps stop the disease from spreading from person to person.

The vaccine's protection lasts at least 3 years. Since most serious pneumococcal infections strike children during their first 2 years, the vaccine will protect them when they are at greatest risk. Some older children and adults may get a different vaccine called pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine. There is a separate Vaccine Information Statement for people getting the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine.

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

##### Children Under 2 Years of Age

- All healthy infants and toddlers should get 4 doses of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine:

Children Between 2 and 5 Years of Age Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine is recommended for children between 2 and 5 years of age who:

- have sickle cell disease,
- have a damaged spleen or no spleen,

- have HIV/AIDS,
- have other diseases that affect the immune system, such as diabetes or cancer, or
- take medications that affect the immune system, such as chemotherapy or steroids.

This vaccine should also be considered for all other children between 2 and 5 years of age, but particularly those who:

- are under 3 years of age,
- are of Alaska Native, American Indian or African American descent, or
- attend group child care.

The number of doses needed depends on the age that vaccination begins. Ask your health care provider for more details. Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine may be given at the same time as other childhood vaccines.

### **Some children should not get pneumococcal conjugate vaccine or should wait**

Children should not get pneumococcal conjugate vaccine if they had a severe (life-threatening) allergic reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine.

Children who are moderately or severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled should usually wait until they recover before getting the vaccine. Children with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated.

### **What are the risks from 5 pneumococcal conjugate**

In clinical trials, pneumococcal conjugate vaccine was associated with only mild reactions:

- Up to 3 out of 10 children had redness, tenderness, or swelling where the shot was given.
- About 1 out of 10 had a mild fever.

### **What should I do?**

Call a doctor or get the child to a doctor right away.

Tell your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.

Ask your doctor, nurse, or health department to file a Vaccine Adverse Event Report (VAERS) form, or call VAERS yourself at: 1-800-822-7967

In the rare event that you or your child has a serious reaction to a vaccine, a federal program has been created to help you pay for the care of those who have been harmed. For details about the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, call 1-800-338-2382 or visit the program's website at <http://www.hrsa.gov/bhpr/vicp>

Ask your doctor or nurse. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information. the information of death Call your local or state health department' immunization program. Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Call 1-800-232-2522 (English) Call 1-800-232-0233 (Español)

*This Vaccine Information Statement courtesy of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control, and the National Immunization Program*