

TAKE HOME FACTS: PNEUMONIA VACCINE

What is Pneumonia?

Pneumonia is an inflammation of the lungs, usually caused by an infection. Pneumococcus is the most common cause of bacterial pneumonia. It is the only form of pneumonia for which there is a vaccine. Pneumococcal bacteria are present in healthy throats. When the body defenses are weakened by age, illness or malnutrition, the bacteria multiply and become harmful. The infection spreads quickly through the blood and the rest of the body. Meningitis, ear infections and bacteremia can occur. Approximately 40,000 people die from pneumonia each year.

About the Vaccine

The vaccine protects against 23 types of pneumococci- the bacteria considered to be the most common cause of pneumonia in adults. It is intended to protect against the severe complications of pneumococcal pneumonia. **MOST PEOPLE NEED TO GET THE VACCINE ONLY ONCE, OR AT THE MOST TWICE, IN THEIR LIFETIME.**

Who Should Get the Vaccine?

- People without a spleen, with sickle cell disease, cardiovascular or pulmonary disease, diabetes, cirrhosis, alcoholism, or cerebrospinal fluid leaks.
- People with weakened immune systems (such as organ transplant recipients and those with AIDS) who have had previous invasive pneumococcal disease.
- Healthy people 65 and older.
- Ethnic groups who are at a much higher risk of infection (Alaskan Natives, Native Americans, and African American adults).

Who Needs to be Revaccinated?

Until recently, revaccination was done only rarely, on the specific advice of the physician. However, new guidelines recommend revaccination for some groups of people who may show decreased protection levels over time. Even in these people only ONE revaccination is recommended, usually after 5 years. Check with you physician.



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You Should Know That:

- You cannot get pneumonia from this shot
- The vaccine will begin to provide its protective effect after two to three weeks and will last for many years.
- The pneumonia shot will not protect all persons who get it against pneumonia
- The pneumonia shot will not protect against all kinds of pneumonia

Possible Side Effects

Some people may experience redness and soreness at the injection site for one to two days. A few people may have a slight fever lasting 24 hours. As with any drug or vaccine, there is a rare possibility that allergic or more serious reactions, even death, could occur.

DO NOT TAKE THIS SHOT IF:

- YOU HAVE EVER HAD A SERIOUS REACTION TO A PNEUMONIA VACCINE
- YOU HAVE A FEVER. (Delay the shot until the fever is gone.)

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE TAKING THE SHOT IF:

- YOU HAVE RECEIVED A PNEUMONIA SHOT BEFORE
- YOU ARE PREGNANT OR NURSING
- YOU HAVE HAD HODGKIN'S DISEASE
- YOU ARE CURRENTLY RECEIVING RADIATION, CHEMOTHERAPY OR IMMUNOSUPPRESSIVE THERAPY

REACTIONS:

If you become ill and visit the doctor, hospital or clinic in the four weeks after today's shot, please report this to VNA Community Healthcare, Inc.

Please notify your doctor that you have received this vaccine, so that your medical record is up to date.



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