

# Important Information about Pneumococcal Disease and Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine\*

## PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY

### What Is Pneumococcal Disease?

- Pneumococcal disease is caused by a bacteria (*Streptococcus pneumoniae*) known as pneumococcus.
- Many people carry the bacteria at the back of their throat or nose without getting sick.
- This bacteria sometimes overcomes the body's natural defenses and causes serious, even life threatening, diseases, including
  - meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain);
  - bacteremia (a widespread infection involving the blood and multiple organs); and,
  - pneumonia (infection of the lungs).
- Pneumococcal bacteria are also an important cause of middle ear infections.
- These bacteria are also becoming resistant to some of the drugs used to treat them, so prevention of pneumococcal infections is more important than ever.
- Most pneumococcal disease is preventable through immunization.

### What Is Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine?

- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine is intended for the prevention of pneumococcal disease.
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine provides protection against the 13 most common strains of pneumococcal bacteria.

### Who Should Receive the Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine?

The Nova Scotia schedule recommends this vaccine be given to

- babies age 2 months or older as part of their infant immunizations
- people with any of these conditions:
  - Cancer
  - Congenital Immunodeficiency
  - Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant
  - HIV
  - Immunosuppressive Therapy
  - Solid Organ Transplant
  - Splenic Disorders (Sickle cell disease and hemoglobinopathies)

### CAUTION

#### Who Should NOT Receive Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine?

- people who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose or any component of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine
- people who are sick or have a fever (temperature of 39.5°C/103°F or greater)

*Please read other side.*

*\*Note: there are two types of pneumococcal vaccines. Pneumococcal conjugate is primarily for infants and for some adults and children with high-risk conditions. Pneumococcal polysaccharide is primarily for adults over 65 years of age and for certain high-risk conditions.*

# What to Expect Following Immunization with **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine**

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

You or your child has received pneumococcal conjugate vaccine. This vaccine is important in protecting you or your child from pneumococcal disease.

*People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any vaccine there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.*

### What Are the Possible Side Effects from the Vaccine?

Many people have no side effects after immunization. However, some may have

- injection-site pain, redness and/or swelling. Your child may not want to use the arm or leg in which the needle was given as much as usual. This will go away in a few days.
- fever, approximately four to six hours after the injection, but lasting no longer than 24 hours.

*As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. These medications should not be taken if you have certain medical conditions. Talk to your health care provider about your medical history before using either of these medications.*

### Call your health care provider if

- The fever lasts longer than 24 hours.
- You or your child has a temperature of 39.5°C (103°F) or greater.
- The fever does not come down after acetaminophen or ibuprofen is given.
- Your child has convulsions.
- You or your child are ill with other symptoms.

### QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions regarding pneumococcal disease or pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, please call your local Public Health office or your health care provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the websites of

- Immunize Canada at [immunize.ca/en/default.aspx](http://immunize.ca/en/default.aspx)
- the Public Health Agency of Canada at [phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://phac-aspc.gc.ca)
- the Canadian Paediatric Society at [cps.ca](http://cps.ca)
- 811 at <https://811.novascotia.ca/>