

# Pneumococcal Conjugate Immunization

The **Pneumococcal Conjugate** immunization is part of the routine Yukon Children's Immunization Schedule to prevent or lessen the complications of pneumococcal infections. This vaccine covers 13 different strains of the bacteria. These bacteria are spread from person to person through droplets in the air via coughing/sneezing, or direct contact via saliva. The risk is much higher when you are already infected with a viral infection such as influenza.

## **Pneumococcal bacteria can cause:**

- Ear and sinus infections
- Pneumonia
- Meningitis (infection of the fluid in the brain/spinal cord)
- Infections of the blood stream

## **Complications of pneumococcal bacteria may lead to:**

- Deafness
- Brain damage
- Death (26% of meningitis cases)

## **Why is the Pneumococcal Conjugate vaccine recommended?**

Many people who are exposed to pneumococcal bacteria only have mild symptoms, but there are some people who are at high risk of getting very sick, including young children, older adults and individuals with certain medical conditions. This vaccine is very effective and safe, and is the best way to prevent or lessen the complications of pneumococcal infections. In addition to doses given as part of the routine immunization schedule, extra doses may be given to infants/children that have certain high risk conditions (e.g. diabetes, chronic kidney or liver disease). These children, and other specific high risk adults, may later need an additional dose of the Pneumococcal Polysaccharide vaccine as well. Talk with your health care provider about what you require.

## **Possible side effects of the immunization:**

Common reactions to the immunization may include redness, tenderness, and swelling at the injection site. Some may develop a fever, headache, or fatigue. These are generally mild, and only last 1-2 days.

Side effects of the immunization are easily relieved by: Applying a cold/damp compress to the site, administering acetaminophen or ibuprofen for temperatures 38.5°C or higher. See your health care provider if your symptoms are severe or last longer than 48 hours.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any immunization because there is a rare possibility of developing a severe allergic reaction which is treatable at the clinic. This happens to fewer than 1 in 1 million people. If it happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number.

**[yukonimmunization.ca](http://yukonimmunization.ca)**

