



## Fact Sheet:

### Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine – 15 valent

#### 1. What is pneumococcal disease and what are the complications of this disease?

Pneumococcal disease is caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus (S.) pneumoniae*. Pneumococcal infections can range from ear and sinus infection to pneumonia and blood stream infection. Invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) causes more severe disease and occurs more often among young children, older adults and those with underlying medical or living conditions that place them at higher risk for disease. IPD is a major cause of illness and death worldwide.

The pneumococcal conjugate vaccine provides protection against the 15 strains of *S. pneumoniae* bacteria which cause most of the pneumococcal illness in children under 5 years of age. The introduction of immunization programs for children has contributed to a considerable decrease in the incidence of childhood invasive pneumococcal disease caused by the strains in the vaccine. A significant observation of this immunization program is the benefit of population “herd” immunity resulting from reduced presence of the bacteria in circulation.

#### 2. What are the contents of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine?

This vaccine works by helping the body to make its own antibodies, which protect against pneumococcal disease. This vaccine contains protein material from pneumococcal bacteria linked to a carrier protein, providing protection against 15 types of pneumococcal bacteria. It is an inactivated vaccine and does not contain any living bacteria. Traces of non-medicinal ingredients are present to keep the vaccine stable, sterile, and to help it be more effective. A complete listing of contents is included in the product insert and may be requested from the immunizing provider.

There are no antibiotics within the vaccine, and no latex in the prefilled syringe used to administer the vaccine.

#### 3. What are the possible reactions from this vaccine and how are they managed?

The most common side effects occur within 24-48 hours after the injection and include swelling, redness, and tenderness at the site of injection. Decreased appetite, irritability, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, muscle or joint pain, fatigue, change in sleep pattern, drowsiness and fever may also occur. These side effects are generally mild and last a short time.

It is not necessary to give acetaminophen with every immunization. If a person experiences discomfort or fever after receiving the vaccine, acetaminophen can relieve these symptoms.

Other side effects can occasionally occur after immunization - if you experience any side effects not listed above or you have questions or concerns speak to your healthcare professional.

The most serious but rare side effect is a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) which can be life threatening and which usually occurs within 15-20 minutes of receiving the vaccine. Procedures are in place for the nurse to quickly respond to anaphylaxis by administering adrenaline.

**Please remain in the waiting room for 15 minutes after immunization. See a doctor or seek medical attention if any serious side effect occurs. Report any serious reaction to the public health nurse.**

#### **4. What are the situations in which pneumococcal conjugate vaccine should not be given?**

The vaccine **should not** be given to :

- Those who have had an anaphylactic (severe or life threatening) reaction or who have a known hypersensitivity to any of the contents of the vaccine; or reaction to any other vaccine that contains diphtheria toxoid.
- Those who are acutely ill, especially with a fever, should return later for the immunization.

Tell your healthcare professional if you or your child have been given a pneumococcal vaccine before or have recently received any other vaccine.

#### **5. What are the risks if this vaccine is not received?**

In addition to the very young and persons age 65 years or older, individuals with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of developing pneumococcal infection and severe illness.

Pneumococcal disease can lead to long-lasting complications and can result in significant morbidity and mortality, especially for young children and others at increased risk of IPD. The most effective way to prevent these infections is through immunization. Pneu-C-15 are designed to prevent infection from a larger number of serotypes than previous pneumococcal vaccines.

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