

PROTECT YOURSELF OR YOUR CHILD FROM PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE

What is Pneumococcal Disease?

Pneumococcal disease is caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. When the bacteria enter the body, it can cause serious infections such as meningitis and pneumonia, as well as serious long-term effects like deafness and brain damage. This bacteria is also the cause of one third to half of middle ear infections.

How is this disease spread?

Pneumococcal disease is spread from an infected person to another person through contact such as kissing, coughing, sneezing or from soiled items (such as tissues). Hand washing is always a good way to prevent diseases.

How can this disease be prevented?

There are two types of vaccine which protect from most types of pneumococcal disease and are part of the Newfoundland and Labrador immunization program. This vaccine is given to children ages 2, 4, 6 and 18 months of age. There is also a program for people age 65 and over as well as those with chronic health conditions.

Is there a reaction to the vaccine?

Some people may have a sore arm or leg (redness, tenderness and swelling) for a day or two depending upon where the vaccine was given. Some children may also have a slight fever or be fussy, restless and not very hungry for a day or two. For the soreness and fever, a medication such as acetaminophen can be given. If a person has any other side effects, you should notify your doctor or community/ public health nurse.

Who should not get this vaccine?

People who have allergies to substances in the vaccine or serious illnesses at the time the vaccine is due should let the community/public health nurse or doctor know. A slight cold is not a reason to delay the vaccine.

For additional information and services
contact your Regional Health Authority
listed in the white pages of your telephone
book.