

## Pneumococcal polysaccharide 23-valent (Pneu-P-23) vaccine

### What is Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

Pneu-P-23 is a safe and effective vaccine that protects against 23 strains (types) of streptococcus pneumoniae bacteria that cause pneumococcal disease. The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

### Who should receive Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

In New Brunswick, it is provided free as part of the New Brunswick routine immunization schedule for:

1. All individuals aged 65 and over: **a single dose** (even if they have previously received a dose before reaching 65 – based on other eligibility criteria).
2. Newly admitted residents of long-term care facilities should receive **one dose**
3. High risk individuals of invasive pneumococcal disease

For Health Care professionals, please consult our [NB Immunization Guide](#) (NBIPG); section: [Eligibility criteria for publicly funded vaccines in NB](#) for full details of eligibility criteria in NB.

We encourage everyone to consult their healthcare provider to see if you are eligible for the vaccine. The pneumococcal vaccines are publicly funded for those who qualify, and a prescription is not required. People who are not eligible but wish to receive it can, at a cost, and should discuss this with their Primary Health Care provider.

### What are the benefits of Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

The bacteria can cause serious and life-threatening infections such as meningitis (an infection of the lining that covers the brain), septicemia (an infection of the blood), and pneumonia (an infection of the lungs).

The vaccine is the best way to protect against pneumococcal infection, a serious and sometimes fatal disease. Over 90% of pneumococcal disease is caused by these 23 strains.

When you get immunized, you help protect others as well.

### How safe is Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

This vaccine is very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get pneumococcal disease, which can be very serious.

### How is Pneu-P-23 vaccine given?

The vaccine should be given by injection into the muscle of the upper arm in older children and adults.

## Who should not receive Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

If you have a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of pneumococcal vaccine, or to any part of the vaccine or its container, you should speak with your health-care provider or Public Health nurse.

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. However, if you have concerns speak with your health care provider.

## What are the possible reactions after receiving the vaccine?

Reactions to the vaccine are generally mild and last one to two days. Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, redness and swelling where the vaccine was given. Fever may also occur.

With any vaccine, there is an extremely rare possibility (less than one in a million people) of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. For this reason, it is important to remain in the clinic for 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine. Signs of this reaction may include rash, difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. This reaction can be treated. Any unexpected or serious reaction to a vaccine should be reported to your health-care provider.

## What can be done for a reaction to the Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

A cold compress at the injection site may reduce discomfort.

For discomfort and fever, you can take or give your child medicine by following the manufacturer's instructions. Ask your healthcare provider what medicine is best.

Aspirin (ASA) should NOT be given to children under the age of 18 years, due to its link to Reye's syndrome.

## What else you need to know?

Please inform the immunization provider of any health problems or allergies.

Your immunization provider will provide a record of the immunization. Please keep this record in a safe place and bring it when your next immunization is due.

If you have any unusual reactions to the vaccine or you have any questions or concerns, please contact your health-care provider.

## Further Information

For more information contact your pharmacist, [Public Health Clinics](#) or Tele-Care 811 to find out if you or your child is eligible.

## Useful websites

- Government of New-Brunswick: [Pneumococcal disease \(Invasive Pneumococcal Disease or IPD\) \(gnb.ca\)](https://www2.gnb.ca/eng/health/pneumococcal_disease_ipd.htm)
- Public Health Agency of Canada: [Pneumococcal vaccines: Canadian Immunization Guide - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/vaccines-and-immunization/canadian-immunization-guide.html)