



PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINES FOR ADULTS

WHAT IS PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE?

Pneumococcal disease is a bacterial **infection** caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, (also known as **pneumococcus**) that is often found in the nose and throat of healthy individuals. There are more than 100 serotypes (strains) of pneumococcus, but only some of them cause most cases of pneumococcal disease. The bacteria can spread from person to person through:










Inhaling droplets (infectious respiratory particles) when an infected person coughs or sneezes



Touching contaminated surfaces, objects or body parts and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth

The bacteria can infect **different parts of the body**, causing mild to serious disease.¹ Symptoms vary depending on where the infection occurs. Serious infections, also known as **invasive pneumococcal disease**, can be life-threatening or cause long-term complications.

Types of pneumococcal disease ²		Symptoms
Mild infections 	 Otitis media (middle ear infection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ear pain • fever • swelling of the ear drum
	 Sinusitis (sinus infection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • runny or stuffy nose • cough • facial pain or pressure • headache
Serious infections (invasive pneumococcal disease) 	 Bacteraemia (bloodstream infection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chills • fever • low alertness
	 Meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confusion • fever • headache • sensitivity to light • stiff neck • vomiting
	 Pneumonia (lung infection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chest pain • fever and chills • cough • difficulty breathing <p>Older people may not have obvious symptoms and could appear confused or less alert instead.</p>

WHO IS AT RISK?

Anyone can get pneumococcal disease, and it is possible to be infected **more than once**. However, not everyone who is exposed to the bacteria will develop symptoms.

Certain adults are at a **higher risk** of contracting pneumococcal disease and developing serious complications, including those who are:³

- aged 65 years or older, or
- aged 18 years or older who have:
 - ▶ a weakened immune system, including those who have had their spleen removed or have a non-functional spleen
 - ▶ cochlear implants (devices surgically placed in the ear that help people hear) or fluid leaks from the brain or spinal cord, or
 - ▶ long-term health conditions, such as diabetes or heart, lung, kidney or liver disease



PREVENTING INVASIVE PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE

Vaccination is a **safe and effective way** to protect people – especially those at higher risk – from invasive pneumococcal disease. In Singapore, there are 2 types of pneumococcal vaccines available:

- pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCV)
- pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccines (PPSV)

Vaccines such as PCV13, PCV20 and PPSV23 are available to protect adults against specific strains (serotypes) of *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.



WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE FROM CLINICAL STUDIES SAY ABOUT PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINES?

ACE reviewed the available clinical evidence and received expert advice from doctors about the use of pneumococcal vaccines to prevent invasive pneumococcal disease.⁴

Studies showed that the vaccination regimens – PCV20 alone or PCV13 followed by PPSV23 – are likely to be **as safe and effective as each other** for preventing invasive pneumococcal disease in adults.



HOW VACCINATION WORKS

Vaccines help your body learn how to defend itself from pneumococcal bacteria before they make you seriously ill. After receiving the vaccine, your body needs time to build full protection. Depending on the pneumococcal vaccine prescribed by your doctor, you may require more than one dose, and the doses must be spaced out appropriately to ensure long-lasting immunity.

Getting a dose too early, missing a shot, or receiving the wrong type of vaccine can reduce its effectiveness or increase the chance of side effects, which may include a slight headache, fever, body aches or tiredness.⁵

Click here or scan the QR code to learn more about pneumococcal vaccines.⁶



To get the most from your vaccination:

- **Keep track of the vaccine name or brand** you received, and the number of doses required
- **Know when your next dose is due**, if additional doses are recommended
- **Maintain healthy habits**, such as regular handwashing, not smoking, and staying physically active, to further reduce your risk of infection

The different pneumococcal vaccines are **not interchangeable**. Check with your doctor to see which vaccine is most suitable for you. It is also a good idea to keep a personal record of your vaccination dates for easy reference in the future.



SUBSIDISED PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINES⁴

The government provides subsidies for specific brands of vaccines on the Subsidised Vaccine List (SVL) when they are given to adults at public healthcare institutions and CHAS GP clinics according to the National Adult Immunisation Schedule (NAIS).⁸

Click here or scan the QR code to learn more about the Subsidised Vaccine List.⁹

SUBSIDISED

- ✓ PCV13 (Prevenar 13)
- ✓ PCV20 (Prevenar 20)
- ✓ PPSV23 (Pneumovax 23)



KEY MESSAGES

Vaccination saves lives. Pneumococcal vaccines such as PCV13, PCV20 and PPSV23 help to prevent invasive pneumococcal disease and are subsidised, making them more affordable. Receiving the **right vaccine at the right time** is important. Discuss with your doctor which vaccine is suitable for you and how many doses you need.

Sources

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4. ACE Technology Guidance on Pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (15-valent and 20-valent) for the prevention of pneumococcal disease in adults, February 2025
5. HealthHub, Singapore, Pneumococcal Vaccine, December 2022
6. Ministry of Health (MOH), Singapore, Protect Yourself Against Pneumonia, 2025
7. Communicable Diseases Agency, Singapore, National Immunisation Registry, 2025
8. Ministry of Health (MOH), Singapore, Subsidies for National Adult Immunisation Schedule (NAIS) vaccines administered at public healthcare settings, April 2025
9. Ministry of Health (MOH), Singapore, Subsidised Vaccine List, March 2025



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