

Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine Pevnar[®] 13

What is Pevnar[®]13?

Pevnar[®] 13 is a safe and effective vaccine that protects against 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria. It replaces Pevnar[®] and is approved by Health Canada. In this province, it is provided free as part of the New Brunswick routine immunization schedule.

What are the benefits of Pevnar[®]13?

Prior to the introduction of Pevnar[®]13 into the New Brunswick routine immunization schedule on July 1, 2010, children received Pevnar[®], a pneumococcal conjugate vaccine that protected against seven serotypes of the bacteria causing invasive pneumococcal disease.

Since the introduction of pneumococcal vaccines, the rates of pneumococcal disease in children younger than five dropped by more than 70 per cent. Infection from types not contained in Pevnar[®], however, began to increase. The Pevnar[®]13 vaccine will now protect against an additional six types of pneumococcal bacteria, including the main serotypes that have been causing recent invasive pneumococcal disease in children.

How safe is Pevnar[®]13?

This vaccine is very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get pneumococcal disease, which can be very serious. The safety of this vaccine was assessed in 13 clinical trials: approximately 15,000 doses were given to 4,729 healthy infants who were six weeks to 16 months of age.

How is Pevnar[®]13 given?

The vaccine should be given by injection into the muscle of the upper thigh or arm. Because children do not develop muscle mass in their upper arms until 12 months and older, they will receive the vaccine in the upper outer part of the thigh. The vaccine can be given in the upper arm (deltoid muscle) once enough muscle is developed (at age 12 to 18 months).

Who should receive Pevnar[®]13?

All infants and young children will be offered Pevnar[®]13 as part of their routine immunizations at two, four and 12 months of age. Those who have started their series will be given Pevnar[®]13 for their next planned dose. Children who are at high risk of pneumococcal disease and have already finished their series with Pevnar[®] but are younger than five years will be offered a dose of Pevnar[®]13. High-risk children have:

- no spleen, or a spleen that is not working properly;
- sickle-cell disease;
- an immune system weakened by disease or medical treatment;
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection;
- chronic liver disease, including cirrhosis, chronic hepatitis B or C;
- chronic kidney, heart or lung disease;
- an islet cell or solid organ transplant, or a cochlear (inner ear) implant, or are waiting for one;
- had or are having a stem cell transplant; or
- diabetes, cystic fibrosis or a chronic cerebrospinal fluid leak.

Who should not receive Prevnar®13?

If your child has had 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.

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/or swelling where the vaccine was given;
- fever;
- sleepiness;
- crankiness; and/or
- a loss of appetite.

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 your child receives Prevnar®13. 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 if your child has a reaction to the Prevnar®13?

- A cold compress at the injection site may reduce discomfort.
- For discomfort and fever you may give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol®)
- Ibuprofen (Advil®) may also be used; you should consult with your doctor, however, before using this medication if your child is younger than six months.
- 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 if your child has any health problems or allergies.

Your immunization provider will provide you with a record of your child's immunization. Please keep this record in a safe place and bring it with you when your child is due for his/her next immunization.

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

Further Information

The Prevnar®13 vaccine is available through your local [Public Health office](#) or health-care provider.

Useful websites:

- Government of New-Brunswick <http://www.gnb.ca/health>
- Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion <http://www.immunize.cpha.ca>
- Public Health Agency of Canada <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>