



# QUESTIONS Q & A FOR PARENTS ANSWERS

ACVIP : 2020 - 2021

## PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINES

### What are the diseases caused by the Pneumococcus?

- ✦ The pneumococcal vaccine protects your child from potentially serious, and even life-threatening infections caused by pneumococcus bacteria, which include (a) pneumococcal meningitis (an infection of the tissue covering the brain and spinal cord) and (b) pneumonia (lung infection). While pneumonia is a serious condition, meningitis can cause lifelong disability, or death. The Pneumococcus is also a common cause of ear infections.
- ✦ Children younger than 5 years and the elderly more than 65 years, are among those most at risk for the disease. Children with weak immune systems are at highest risk of infection and complications.
- ✦ The disease spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Some children may carry the bacteria in their nose and throats (carriers) and spread pneumococcal disease, without suffering from the disease.
- ✦ India has a very high burden of pneumococcal diseases.

### What are the symptoms of pneumococcal disease?

- ✦ The symptoms depend on the part of the body it affects.
  - Pneumococcal pneumonia (lung infection): Fever with chills, cough, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing, chest pain
  - Pneumococcal meningitis (infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord): High fever, headache, fits, stiff neck, vomiting, are some of the symptoms of this dangerous condition.
  - Blood infection (bacteremia and sepsis) from pneumococcal disease can present with high fever and chills.

### Which are different types of Pneumococcal vaccines available in India and

There are 4 types of vaccines available.

- a. Prevenar 13 -PCV (Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine) 13: contains 13 varieties (serotypes) of the pneumococcus
  - b. Synflorix -PCV 10: contains 10 varieties of the pneumococcus
  - c. Pneumosil-PCV 10: contains 10 varieties of the pneumococcus (2 varieties are different from those present in Synflorix)
  - d. Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23): contains 23 types of the pneumococcus
- The PCVs are preferred for the initial immunization at all ages.

### What is the schedule?

- ✦ For children below the age of 6 months: 3 doses at 6-10-14 weeks of age and a booster at 12 to 15 months of age
- ✦ If your child has missed these vaccines, your doctor will advise you the age-appropriate schedule.
- ✦ Routine use of PCV13/PCV10 above the age of 5 years is not recommended.
- ✦ Children more than 5 years of age, with conditions that render them at high-risk for Pneumococcal diseases, need the pneumococcal vaccines beyond 5 years of age.
- ✦ PPSV23 is recommended for:
  - a. All adults 65 years or older,
  - b. Anyone 2 years or older with certain medical conditions that can lead to an increased risk for pneumococcal disease
  - c. PPSV23 cannot be used in children below 2 years of age.

### **Is it a safe vaccine?**

Yes. The pneumococcal vaccines are safe. When side effects do occur, they are usually mild and transient and include the following: Redness, swelling, or soreness where the shot was given, fever and rarely fussiness, sleepiness, loss of appetite.

### **Who should receive this vaccine?**

All infants and children (till 5 years of age) should receive this vaccine.

### **Who should not receive the vaccines?**

- ✦ Anyone who has had a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of PCV, or to any vaccine containing diphtheria toxoid (for example, DTaP), or has any severe, life-threatening allergies to vaccine components.

*This vaccine does not prevent all pneumococcal disease. It prevents pneumococcal disease caused only by pneumococcus bacterial types present in the vaccine. The vaccines protect against > 70% of the disease-causing pneumococci, in India.*

### **Is PCV 13 recommended in adults/elderly?**

Yes. PCV 13 is licensed for use for those >50 years of age. The schedule is to administer PCV 13 first followed by PPSV 23, 6 to 12 months later. For individuals with high-risk factors for pneumococcal diseases, the PPSV 23 can be administered 8 weeks after PCV 13.

**For more information, please contact your doctor.**

