

Dr. Dec's Information on Pneumonia Shots

Many of you have been asking about whether you should get a PNEUMONIA SHOT? So, I have decided to give you some information, so you can decide whether you want it or not. Actually, there are 2 types of pneumonia shots: PREVNAR-13 & PNEUMO 23 (or PNEUMOVAX). They aim to fight the most common pneumonia bacteria called "Streptococcus pneumonia" or "Pneumococcus".

PREVNAR-13 has been given to newborns in 3 doses for a number of years. At present, for adults, it is NOT universally covered by OHIP unless you fall into a special category (see below).

The recommendation is that the following groups get vaccinated with Prevnar-13:

Adults > 50 years of age who meet the high risk criteria are:

1. Spleen Removal (Asplenia)
2. Blood Problems (eg. Sickle cell disease/Thalassemia)
3. Individuals with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
4. Some Cancer Patients (including leukemia and lymphoma)
5. Immune System Deficiencies
6. Being on medication that drastically affects your Immune System (Chemotherapy)
7. Being on Radiation Therapy or Post-Organ-Transplant Therapy,

Recommendation to receive 1 dose of Prevnar-13 (covered by OHIP) & then should get 1 dose of Pneumo 23 vaccine 8 weeks later (covered by OHIP), if not previously given. A second dose (booster dose) of Pneumo 23 is recommended 5 years after the 1st dose & is given only once in a lifetime.

However, if you have other medical conditions, (such as the ones listed below under Pneumo 23) it is recommended that you consider getting the PREVNAR-13 shot, although in these cases, it is not covered by OHIP. The cost of the shot ranges from \$ 105- \$130.

PNEUMOVAX has been given for years, and many of you have already received it, and possibly have had a booster dose. It only covers certain strains of the pneumococcus bacteria, which is why the other vaccine was created. **PNEUMO 23/PNEUMOVAX** is covered by OHIP. *[Although, the government (OHIP) does not pay for Prevnar-13, I recommend that you also consider getting Prevnar-13 if you have any of the following medical conditions (other than just age).]*

The recommendation is that the following groups get vaccinated with Pneumo 23:

1. Age 65 years and older
2. Residents of nursing homes, homes for the aged and chronic care facilities or wards
3. Respiratory disease (chronic) [including asthma patients on oral steroids]
4. Heart disease (chronic)
5. Liver disease (chronic) [cirrhosis]
6. Kidney disease (chronic)
7. Diabetes mellitus
8. Cerebrospinal fluid leak (chronic)
9. Neurologic conditions (chronic) [Multiple Sclerosis/Stroke]

Recommendation is to receive 1 dose of Pneumo 23 (covered by OHIP). A second dose (booster dose) of Pneumo 23 is recommended 5 years after the 1st dose for the high risk list under the Prevnar-13 criteria as well as for those with Liver Cirrhosis or Chronic Kidney Failure. A booster dose is given only once in a lifetime.

If you have any additional questions about the Pneumonia Shot, please ask Dr. Dec or his staff.