



Frequently Asked Questions on

PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE

QUESTION 1: WHAT IS PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE?

ANSWER: This refers to a group of diseases caused by a bacterium called *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, (also known as pneumococcus).

QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DISEASES THAT ARE CAUSED BY THE PNEUMOCOCCUS?

ANSWER: Pneumonia (infection of the lungs), meningitis (infection of the coverings of the brain), bacteraemia (infection of the blood) and otitis media (middle ear infection)

QUESTION 3: WHAT AGE DOES THIS DISEASE AFFECT?

ANSWER: These diseases affect children under five years of age and especially those under two years of age. Pneumococcal disease is a serious disease that can lead to death if not treated on time.

QUESTION 4: HOW IS IT SPREAD?

ANSWER: The disease is spread from person to person by coughing, sneezing or contact with respiratory secretions of an infected person.

QUESTION 5: WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF THIS DISEASE?

PNEUMONIA

Fever
Cough
Shortness of breath and chest pains

MENINGITIS

Stiff neck
Fever
Mental confusion and disorientation
Visual sensitivity to light (photophobia)

BACTEREMIA

Joint pains
Chills
Other symptoms are similar to those of pneumonia and meningitis.

OTITIS MEDIA

Painful ear
Red or swollen ear drum
Sometimes sleeplessness
Fever and irritability

QUESTION 6: HOW IS PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE PREVENTED?

ANSWER: There are some general measures that can be undertaken to try and reduce the risk of your child getting pneumococcal infection.

Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months

Washing hands regularly with clean water and soap before breast feeding or handling the baby's food.

Washing hands with clean water and soap after wiping the baby's nose.

Sick babies should stay at home to avoid infecting others.

Get your child vaccinated for pneumococcal disease as per the immunization schedule.

Properly dispose off used tissues in a toilet or rubbish bin.

Open windows to allow free circulation of air.

NB: Remember that prevention is better than cure.

QUESTION 7: WHAT ARE THE VACCINES THAT CAN BE USED TO CURE THIS DISEASE?

ANSWER: Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV 13) is a vaccine used to protect the infants and young children against of pneumococcal disease such as meningitis, pneumonia and bacteremia. The vaccine is given by an injection.

QUESTION 8: WHO SHOULD GET THE VACCINE?

ANSWER: The vaccine is given to children and it is usually given at the same time as other as other childhood vaccines. The vaccine is given in three doses by injecting at the age of 3, and 4 months.

QUESTION 9: WHO SHOULD NOT GET PNEUMOCOCCAL CONJUGATE VACCINE?

ANSWER: Children who had a severe allergic reaction to previous dose should not receive another.

Children who are moderately or severely ill should wait until their conditions improve to be vaccinated.

QUESTION 10: POSSIBLE REACTIONS AFTER THE VACCINE

In general Pneumococcal vaccine is safe, there are no severe side effect but there may be possible reactions that could occur such as :

- Irritability
- Persistent crying
- Swelling and tenderness at injection site
- Fever
- Redness or pain where the injection was given
- Muscle ache.

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For More Information Contact
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