

Common Questions About the Pneumococcal Vaccine

Prevents severe infections, such as pneumonia and meningitis. Brand Name (s): Pneumovax 23, Pnu-Imune 23. There may be other brand names for this medicine.

When should this Medicine not be used ?: You should not receive pneumococcal vaccine if you have had an allergic reaction to it, or if you are in the first 3 months of pregnancy. This vaccine is not recommended in infants and children under 2 years of age.

How to use this Medicine: You may receive the shot only once unless your doctor decides you need another shot. Tell your doctor if you have had this type of shot before. The shot can be given in the shoulder muscle or in the thigh muscle.

Drugs and foods to Avoid: Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medicine, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products.

Warnings while using this Medicine: This vaccine is usually given only once as side effects may occur more often if given a second time. Make sure you tell your doctor if you have received pneumococcal vaccine in the past. Check with your doctor before receiving pneumococcal vaccine if you have an illness with a fever. Patients who are getting medicine like prednisone, receiving chemotherapy for cancer, or who have HIV infections or AIDS may not be fully protected by this vaccine. Because there may be some benefit, your doctor may still want you to receive the vaccine.

Possible Side Effects While Using This Medication: Trouble breathing, chest tightness, or wheezing, swelling of the face, lips or throat, severe skin rash, intense itching, or hives unexplained high fever, unusual bleeding or bruising.

If You Notice These Serious Side Effects, Talk with Your Doctor: Soreness, redness, or a lump where the shot was given. If you notice other side effects that you think are caused by this medicine, tell your doctor.

Common Questions about the Flu Vaccine

Who should get a flu shot? The flu shot should be given to protect people who are most likely to have serious health problems if they get the flu. These people should get the flu shot: Children ages 6 months to 23 months. People who are 65 years of age and older. People 2 years old or older who have an underlying, long-term illness (heart or lung disease, metabolic disease (like diabetes), kidney disease, a blood disorder, or a weakened immune system (including people with HIV/AIDS)). Women who will be pregnant this season. People who live in nursing homes or other chronic-care places. People who are 6 months to 18 years of age, and take aspirin daily. Health-care workers who take care of patients. People who have or take care of a baby under 6 months old. (Do not give a flu shot to babies under 6 months.)

Who should not get a flu shot? Babies under 6 months old should not get a flu shot. Healthy people 2 to 64 years old should wait to get a flu shot or skip getting a shot this season.

What about the nasal-spray vaccine, sold as FluMist? FluMist is a vaccine that you spray in your nose instead of getting as a shot. Healthy people, ages 5 to 49 years old, can get Flumist this season. This is a good option for people in this age group who have or care for babies under 6 months of age or for health-care workers who take care of sick patients. Do not use FluMist if you are pregnant or if you care for or live with someone whose immune system is very weak and that person has to be kept away from all germs.

What can you do to help stop the spread of flu? These are good health habits you should use to protect yourself and others. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze - throw the tissue away after you use it. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner. Stay away as much as you can from people who are sick. If you get the flu, stay home from work or school. If you are sick, do not go near other people so that you don't make them sick too.

Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs often spread this way. What if you are someone who should get a flu shot and your clinic or doctor does not have vaccine? Contact the health department or ask your doctor or someone at your clinic where you can get a flu shot. Some public clinics that have flu shots may be posted at the American Lung Association website.

Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
For more information, ask your healthcare provider or call the CDC Immunization
Hotline: English and Espanol 800-CDC-INFO Website: www.cdc.gov/flu