



Pneumococcal Myth/Fact Sheet

Myth: Pneumococcal disease is not common or serious.

Fact: Pneumococcal disease kills thousands of people each year; in fact it kills more people in the United States than all other vaccine-preventable disease combined. This disease can cause life-threatening infections including pneumonia, bacteremia, and meningitis. Adults account for 90% of the bacteremia and meningitis cases caused by pneumococcal disease in the U.S. and 95% of the pneumococcal deaths in the U.S. occur in adults. **Vaccination is the best method to prevent from getting pneumococcal disease.**

Myth: You can get pneumococcal disease from the pneumococcal vaccine.

Fact: The two pneumococcal vaccines (PPSV23 and PCV13) are made from inactivated bacteria and cannot cause illness. Side effects may occur such as soreness, redness, or swelling at site of injection, fever, and aches; however, these are usually mild and short-lived. Pneumococcal vaccination is safe and the best way to prevent pneumococcal infection.

Myth: You should not get PPSV23 or PCV13 if you are sick.

Fact: Presence of a mild illness, such as a cold or allergies, without fever should not prevent vaccination. Individuals with a moderate-to-severe illness with or without a fever should wait until they recover to get vaccinated; however, vaccination against pneumococcal disease is highly recommended for adults 65 years and older and adults with certain medical conditions. Individuals that have had a severe reaction to either of the pneumococcal vaccines **should avoid vaccination.**

Myth: You should not get the pneumococcal vaccine at the same time you receive the influenza vaccine due to increased side effects.

Fact: Both vaccines can be given at the same time (but at different sites) without increasing the risk of side effects. Pneumococcal pneumonia is a complication that can result from influenza, especially in older adults, so it is important for this age group to be vaccinated against both diseases.

