

PNEUMOCOCCAL INFECTION AND PPV23 VACCINE IN ADULTS AGED 65 YEARS AND ABOVE

Streptococcus pneumoniae (*S. pneumoniae*, 'pneumococcus') is an important cause of serious infection (such as pneumonia or meningitis), especially in young children, older adults and immunocompromised people. Invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) is an illness characterized by the presence of *S. pneumoniae* in a normally sterile site (e.g. blood, cerebrospinal fluid, joint fluid or pleural fluid). IPD mainly occurs in children under 5 years and those aged 65 years and above. Transmission is from person to person by droplet infection or direct contact with respiratory secretions of someone carrying the organism. Infection can occur at any time throughout the year but rates peak during the winter months. The PPV23 vaccine protects against 23 capsular types of pneumococcus.

Routine Pneumococcal Vaccine in Adults ≥ 65 years:

A single dose of PPV23 is recommended for all persons aged 65 years and older.

- Adults aged ≥ 65 years should receive a dose of PPV23 if they received PPV23 more than 5 years previously and were less than 65 years of age at the time.
- Booster doses are not recommended i.e. those who received one dose of PPV23 at age ≥ 65 years should not receive a further dose **regardless of immune status**.

Contraindications:

- Anaphylaxis to any of the vaccine constituents.

Precautions:

- Acute severe febrile illness; defer until recovery.
- Delay for at least 5 years after a previous dose of PPV23.
 - *Immunisation (primary and revaccination) with PPV23 can result in moderate or severe pain and/or large induration at the injection site, especially if less than 5 years has elapsed since the first injection. Adverse events are more common following revaccination.*

Frequently Asked Questions:

I have made every effort to establish vaccination status but cannot ascertain if my patient has received the PPV23 vaccine aged 65 years age or older, what should I do?

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee advise that in this situation *it may be assumed that undocumented doses have not been received* and therefore, the single-dose PPV23 vaccine is recommended. The benefit of giving the PPV23 vaccine outweighs the risk of any local reaction. However the person receiving the vaccine should be advised they may develop a self-limited but extensive local reaction at the site of vaccination if they unknowingly have had previous doses of the PPV23 vaccine, particularly within the previous 5 years.

If my patient had a PPV23 vaccine aged 62 years, do they need another dose when they are 65 years or older?

Yes. A single-dose PPV23 vaccine is recommended for those aged 65 years and older but the interval should be **at least 5 years** after any previous dose received when under 65 years. **Therefore**, this patient should receive their PPV23 vaccine aged 67 years (5 years after previous PPV23 vaccine).

Can my patient receive the PPV23 vaccine at same time as influenza and COVID-19 vaccines?

Yes, but the vaccines should be given in separate limbs. If all three vaccines are given at the same time, the COVID-19 vaccine should be given in a separate limb and the PPV23 vaccine should be given in the same arm as the flu vaccine, 2.5 cms apart.

Further information:

- <https://www.rcpi.ie/Healthcare-Leadership/NIAC/Immunisation-Guidelines-for-Ireland>
- The Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV23) module on HSeLanD, it is intended for health professionals who will be administering PPV23 or will be responding to queries about PPV23.