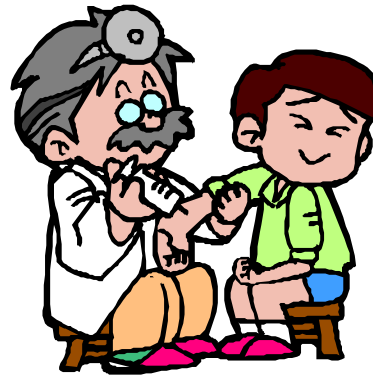


Prevnar™ Vaccine

There has been much talk about a new vaccine called Prevnar™ that immunizes children against infections caused by pneumococcal bacteria. Prevnar can prevent serious infections caused by these bacteria, such as meningitis, pneumonia, and certain blood infections. Prevnar™ has also been called a vaccine that can prevent ear infections. In fact, this may be true, however it would only include ear infections caused by the seven subtypes of pneumococcal bacteria contained in the vaccine.

In February 2000, the Prevnar™ vaccine was approved by the FDA to prevent infections from pneumococcal disease in infants and children. Prevnar is manufactured by Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories and can help prevent bacteremia (infection in the bloodstream), meningitis (infection in the lining of the brain and spinal cord), “strep throat”, ear infections and pneumonia that are caused by certain pneumococcal bacteria. Preliminary studies showed that Prevnar reduced the incidence of ear infections by nine percent and caused a 20 percent decrease in the number of children needing ear tube implants to fight off ear infections. The strains of pneumococcal bacteria targeted by the vaccine are those that are most resistant to current treatment with antibiotics, Prevnar is an injectable vaccine containing 7 different pneumococcal bacteria proteins. Each one is attached to a diphtheria protein that acts as a “carrier” for the pneumococcal bacteria proteins. The Prevnar vaccine does not contain “live” bacteria.



Vaccination with Prevnar requires a series of 4 doses to be given at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and at 12-15 months of age. Prevnar is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Policy (ACIP) and by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) for all children under 2 years of age and for children between the ages of 2-5 years who are at risk of contracting an illness such as meningitis, have had numerous ear infections, are socially or economically disadvantaged, or those who attend group child care. Prevnar is licensed for use in children up to nine years of age.

The Prevnar vaccine is usually injected into the thigh of infants and into the deltoid muscle (upper arm) of toddlers and young children. A partial list of the most common side effects of the Prevnar vaccine include pain or redness at the injection site, fever, irritability, fussiness, drowsiness, restless sleep, decreased appetite. Ask your child’s health care provider for a complete list of risks and benefits associated with the Prevnar vaccine to see if it is appropriate for your child.

Dosing Schedule for Prevnar

Pneumococcal 7-valent Conjugate Vaccine Dosage and Administration

Routine Vaccine Schedule			
2 Months	4 Months	6 Months	12-15 Months
Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3	Dose 4
May be given as early as 6 weeks of age	Dosing interval is 4-8 weeks		Should be administered at least 2 months after the third dose

Vaccine Schedule for Previously Unvaccinated Children >7 months of age		
Age at first dose	Total number of doses	Dosing information
7-11 months	3	Two doses at least 4 weeks apart; third dose after 12 months of age and at least 2 months after the second dose
12-23 months	2	Two doses at least 2 months apart
24 through 59 months	1	One dose

Promoting Healthiness and Safety for Children

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