



## Adult Pneumococcal Vaccination 2005

### Why should adults be vaccinated against pneumococcal disease?

Pneumococcal disease is a bacterial infection that can cause serious illnesses including pneumonia, meningitis, and septicaemia. The National Health and Medical Research Council recommends that the following persons are immunised against pneumococcal disease with 23-valent Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (23PPV), or **Pneumovax23™**.

**Pneumovax23™** is funded (free) for:

- Non-indigenous persons 65 years of age or older (from 1 January 2005), and
- Indigenous persons 50 years of age or older, or 15 to 49 years of age with a predisposing condition (see below).

**Pneumovax23™** is recommended (but not free) for:

- Immunocompromised persons aged over 5 years at increased risk of pneumococcal disease, such as patients with HIV/AIDS, organ transplantation, lymphoid malignancies or asplenia;
- Immunocompetent persons aged over 5 years at increased risk of pneumococcal disease due to chronic illness, such as chronic cardiac, renal or pulmonary disease, diabetes, alcohol-related disease, or CSF leaks;
- Tobacco smokers.

### How common is pneumococcal disease in adults?

In WA in 2003, there were 96 cases of pneumococcal disease in persons over 19 years of age notified to the Department of Health. About 71% of these cases occurred in the metropolitan area. Eleven cases (11%) occurred in indigenous persons. There were 9 deaths (all non-indigenous females), with seven deaths notified in women over 55 years of age. There was no significant seasonal variation in cases.

**Table 1** Notifications (cases) of Pneumococcal Disease by Age Group and Pneumovax23™ Serotype Coverage, Western Australia, 2003.

	AGE GROUP		
	20-49 years	50-64 years	≥65 years
<b>Number of cases</b>	37	21	38
<b>Incidence of cases</b>	1 in 23,700	1 in 16,800	1 in 6,100
<b>Number of indigenous cases</b>	10	1	0
<b>Number of cases with unknown serotypes (strains)</b>	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	3 (8%)
<b>Number of cases with Pneumovax23™ serotypes</b>	30 (81%)	18 (86%)	31 (82%)

### How effective is Pneumovax23™?

**Pneumovax23™** is 56% to 81% effective at preventing pneumococcal disease in elderly persons or persons with predisposing medical conditions and about 71% effective in healthy adults. See **Table 1** for the number of cases of pneumococcal disease by age group by **Pneumovax23™** serotype.

### What are the vaccination schedules for Pneumovax23™\*?

Pneumovax23™	Non-indigenous		Indigenous	
	≥65 years	<65 years with predisposing condition	≥50 years	15-49 years with predisposing condition
<b>Doses</b>	2	2	2	3
<b>Intervals</b>	5 years	Give second dose at 65 years or 10 years after first dose, whichever is later	5 years	Give second dose in 5 years and third dose at 50 years or 10 years after second dose, whichever is later

\*See Childhood Pneumococcal Vaccination 2005 Fact Sheet at [www.health.wa.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/immunisation) for information about pneumococcal vaccination for children less than 5 years of age.

**Who should not be vaccinated with Pneumovax23™ ?**

Persons who have had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose or to any component of **Pneumovax23™** (e.g. phenol). Also, **Pneumovax23™** is not recommended during pregnancy or after recent immunosuppressive therapy or irradiation of lymph nodes.

**What are the side effects from Pneumovax23™ vaccination?**

About 1 in 20 adults develops pain or swelling around the injection site and about 1 in 200 develops a high fever. The risk of **Pneumovax23™** causing serious harm is extremely small.

**What is the treatment for the side effects from Pneumovax23™ vaccination?**

Paracetamol is recommended to help reduce fever and pain. Cooling (e.g. by ice packs) may help to reduce pain and swelling. If any reaction is severe or if you are worried about any symptoms, immediately contact your doctor, community nurse, or local hospital.

**Where can I get more information about Pneumovax23™ vaccination?**

Ask your GP, local Population Health Unit, community nurse, health worker, the Central Immunisation Clinic (Phone: 93211312), CSL (Phone: 93287322), or use the Internet, e.g. [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au), [www.health.wa.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/immunisation)