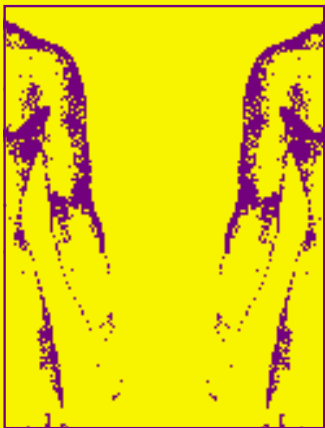


# WHAT BETTER TIME THAN NOW

**Pneumonia occurs all year round  
but increases during the  
influenza period.**

When you have your  
influenza vaccination,\*  
take the opportunity and  
protect yourself against  
pneumonia at the same time



**A solution is prevention**  
**Ask your doctor now**

\*Due to the change in influenza  
strains, influenza vaccine should  
be given on a yearly basis

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# What are pneumococcal infections?

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Pneumococcal infections are caused by a specific bacteria. When the bacteria invade different areas of the body they can cause severe illness. These bacteria are referred to as pneumococcus. They are also known as *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.

Pneumococcal infections are an important cause of avoidable death and illness, especially in older people, those with poor immune system or people who suffer from lasting diseases.<sup>3</sup>

Pneumococcal infections cause a variety of illness:

- **pneumonia** is inflammation of the lungs
- **bacteraemia** occurs when the bacteria gets into the blood stream
- **meningitis** is inflammation of a specific part of the brain
- **otitis media** is inflammation of the middle ear

Pneumonia is the most common result of a pneumococcal infection.<sup>1</sup>

# How are pneumococcal infections treated?

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Once infected, pneumococcal infections respond to antibiotic therapy. Antibiotics do not always prevent death from this bacteria.

## Who is at greatest risk of pneumococcal infections?

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Death from these diseases are highest in patients who have compromised immune systems. At particular risk are people who have no functioning spleens, antibody deficiency, kidney disease, bone marrow tumour, AIDS, recurrent renal failure, organ transplantation and cancer of the lymph glands.<sup>2</sup>

Another group of patients, although usually with good immune systems, are also at risk of severe pneumococcal disease. They include patients with persistent heart and blood vessel or lung disease, diabetes mellitus, alcoholism, liver disease and patients with brain or spinal cord fluid leaks after head trauma or surgery.<sup>2</sup>

## Can pneumococcal infections be prevented?

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Maintaining a healthy lifestyle which includes proper diet and exercise is important, so is keeping a good control of any condition that you may be suffering.

In addition, vaccination with pneumococcal vaccine is an effective way of protecting against pneumococcal infections. An annual influenza vaccination is also useful, as influenza can lead to pneumococcal pneumonia.<sup>2</sup>

## When is the best time for immunisation?

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Pneumococcal vaccine can be given all year round. An ideal time to have it, is when you receive your influenza vaccine.

**Pneumococcal vaccine is not an annual vaccination**

# Who should be vaccinated?

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The National Health and Medical Research Council recommends pneumococcal vaccine be given to the following:<sup>2</sup>

- all individuals over the age of 65 years;
- individuals with asplenia (no functioning spleen), either functional or anatomical, including sickle cell disease in persons more than 2 years of age; where possible the vaccine should be given 14 days before the spleen is removed;
- immunocompromised patients (patients with poor immune systems) at increased risk of pneumococcal disease (e.g. patients with HIV infection before the development of AIDS, kidney disease, bone marrow tumour, cancer of the lymph glands, Hodgkin's disease and organ transplantation);
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 50 years of age;
- immunocompetent people at increased risk of complications from pneumococcal disease because of chronic illness (e.g. chronic cardiac, renal or pulmonary disease, diabetes and alcoholism);
- patients with cerebrospinal fluid leaks (brain or spinal cord fluid leaks).



**A solution is  
prevention**

**Talk with your  
doctor now**

# The most common illness caused by pneumococcal infection is pneumonia.

Every year it is estimated that between:

- 23,000 - 36,000  
Australians will suffer from pneumococcal pneumonia.<sup>1</sup>
- 2,700 - 3,400  
Australians will suffer from pneumococcal bacteraemia. 15-20% of these cases may be fatal.<sup>2</sup>
- 180 - 360 Australians will suffer from pneumococcal meningitis.<sup>2</sup>  
About 18% of these cases may be fatal.<sup>2</sup>

Pneumococcal infections can be prevented

**Ask your doctor**

**P N E U M O N I A**



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