



MEDIA RELEASE

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Pneumococcal Disease

What Is It? And Do Canadians Need to Worry About It?

Pneumococcal disease is a bacterial infection generally found in the upper respiratory tract. Pneumonia (lung infection) is the most common illness caused by pneumococcal disease. Less commonly, pneumococcal infection causes more serious infections such as meningitis (brain infection) or bacteremia (bloodstream infection).

Pneumococcal disease is spread from an infected person to another person by close contact such as coughing and sneezing or sharing items.

The highest rate of infection is seen in children under the age of two; however children with sickle cell disease, lung disease or kidney disease, Aboriginal children and children with cochlear implants are also at high risk of infection.

Adults 65 years or older, adults of any age who smoke, are homeless, use injection drugs or have a chronic illness such as diabetes, heart, lung, kidney or liver disease, as well as people who have had their spleen removed, are also at higher risk of infection.

All Canadian children as part of their childhood immunization program, adults 65 years of age and older, and people of any age at risk of developing pneumococcal disease and related complications, should be immunized.

Pneumococcal vaccines are safe and effective at helping to prevent pneumococcal infection," says Dr. Susan Bowles, Chair of Immunize Canada. All Canadians are encouraged to talk to their doctor, nurse, pharmacist or public health office about the pneumococcal vaccine.

Media Enquiries

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About Immunize Canada

Immunize Canada is a coalition of national non-governmental, professional health, consumer, government and private sector organizations. It is a trustworthy and independent voice in support of immunization of children, adolescents, adults and health care professionals. Its overall aim is to increase awareness about the benefits of immunization and promote the understanding and use of vaccines as recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).