## What is Pneumococcal Disease?

Pneumococcal disease is caused by a bacterial infection that spreads from person to person through sneezing, coughing, saliva and mucus. These infections can affect many different body parts and can lead to pneumonia and meningitis. Pneumococcal disease can be very serious, and may lead to hospitalization or death.

## What are the symptoms of Pneumococcal Disease?

Pneumococcal disease can present as a wide range of signs and symptoms that depend on where the infection occurs. The most common type of this disease is pneumococcal pneumonia, a lung infection where alveoli (lung air sacs) fill with fluid. Pneumococcal can also cause meningitis, which is a swelling of the brain lining.

**Common pneumonia symptoms include:**

- Cough
- Fever
- Chills
- Difficulty breathing

**Common meningitis symptoms include:**

- Headache
- Fever
- Neck Stiffness

## Who is at highest risk for Pneumococcal Disease?



**Young children**

**People with weakened immune systems**

**Older adults (60+)**

**People with chronic health conditions**

## What are the current Pneumococcal Vaccine guidelines?

A number of vaccines protect against pneumococcal infections. Routine pneumococcal vaccinations are recommended for infants, children and adults. In Canada, these vaccines are offered for free to **people older than 65 and those who have underlying health conditions.** Individuals who do not qualify for publicly funded vaccines may be **covered through their employee benefits plans.**

People who are at an increased risk for pneumococcal disease should speak to their healthcare provider about getting the vaccine.

Along with vaccines, people can prevent the spread of pneumococcal disease by hand-washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when sick.

**Vaccination remains one of the best ways to safeguard yourself from preventable diseases, reduce the risk of serious illness and complications and prevent the spread of disease to others. Talk to your healthcare provider to learn more about how vaccination can support you and your families health and wellness.**