



Pneumococcal vaccine

What is Pneumococcal disease?

It refers to a group of diseases caused by bacterium *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (Pneumococcus). It can cause Pneumonia, Sepsis (blood infection), Meningitis, Ear infections, Sinusitis and Bronchitis.

Why protection against Pneumococcal diseases is important?

Pneumococcus is the most common cause of bacterial pneumonia in children under 5 years of age – accounting for over 1 million mortality worldwide annually.

How does pneumococcal disease spread?

Pneumococcal disease spreads direct contact with respiratory droplets - when a carrier / infected person coughs or sneezes (Air borne)

Is Pneumococcal disease preventable?

Pneumococcal disease is preventable by vaccinating children with Pneumococcal Vaccine. 3 types of vaccines are available – 10 Valent (number of strains of pneumococcus), 13 Valent (both used before 2 years of age) and conjugate (23 valent) (used after 2 years of age).

How many doses of Pneumococcal vaccine are required?

Indian Academy of Pediatrics recommends 3 doses of Pneumococcal vaccine in the 1st year of life – at 1.5 months, 2.5 months and 3.5 months of age (at the time of Pentavalent/ Hexavalent vaccines). It is followed by a booster dose at 15 months of age.

If a child aged more than 1 year has not received Pneumococcal vaccine or has defaulted on the schedule, how can he/she be offered protection against Pneumococcal disease? –

Children who have never received routine Pneumococcal vaccine or have missed the scheduled doses, they can be offered pneumococcal vaccine but the schedule and number of doses varies with age of the child. Consult Pediatrician for details.

(Edited by Dr. Sanket Kale)