

**Patient Information about
PNEUMOVAX[®] 23 (pronounced "noo-mo-vax 23")
Generic Name: pneumococcal vaccine polyvalent**

Read this leaflet before you or your child gets the vaccine called PNEUMOVAX 23. If you have any questions about the vaccine after you read this, you should ask your health care provider. This is a summary only. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor, nurse or other health care provider about the vaccine. Only your health care provider can decide if PNEUMOVAX 23 is right for you or your child.

What is PNEUMOVAX 23?

PNEUMOVAX 23 is a vaccine that is given as a shot. It helps protect you from infection by certain germs or bacteria which are called pneumococcus (pronounced "noo-mo-ca-cus"). PNEUMOVAX 23 is for people 50 years of age and older. It is also for people who are 2 years of age and older if they have certain medical conditions that put them at increased risk for infection.

Illnesses or health problems may allow these germs to spread into the blood, lungs, or brain where they can cause serious diseases such as:

- An infection in the blood
- A lung infection (pneumonia) that can also come with an infection in the blood
- An infection of the coverings of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis).

PNEUMOVAX 23 may not protect everyone who gets it. It will not protect against diseases that are caused by bacteria types that are not in the vaccine.

Who should not get PNEUMOVAX 23?

You should not get this vaccine if you (or your child):

- are allergic to any of its ingredients
- had an allergic reaction to PNEUMOVAX 23 in the past
- are less than 2 years old.

What should I tell my health care provider before getting PNEUMOVAX 23?

Tell your health care provider if you (or your child):

- are allergic to PNEUMOVAX 23
- have heart or lung problems
- have a fever
- have immune problems or are receiving radiation treatment for chemotherapy
- are pregnant or breast-feeding

How is PNEUMOVAX 23 given?

Most often, just one shot is given.

If you or your child is in a high-risk group for pneumococcal infection, then your health care provider will decide if it would be helpful to give a second shot of PNEUMOVAX 23 at a later time.

Can PNEUMOVAX 23 be given with other vaccines?

Talk to your health care provider if you plan to get ZOSTAVAX at the same time as PNEUMOVAX 23 because it may be better to get these vaccines at least 4 weeks apart.

Talk to your health care provider if you plan to get PNEUMOVAX 23 at the same time as other vaccines.

What are the possible side effects of PNEUMOVAX 23?

The most common side effects are:

- pain, warmth, soreness, redness, swelling, and hardening at the injection site
- headache
- weakness, feeling tired
- muscle pain

Tell your health care provider or get emergency help right away if you have any of the following problems because these may be signs of an allergic reaction:

- difficulty breathing
- wheezing
- rash
- hives

Side effects at the site where you get the shot may be more common and may feel worse after a second shot than after the first shot.

Tell your health care provider if you or your child has a side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

For a more complete list of side effects, ask your health care provider.

You may also report any side effect to your or your child's health care provider, or directly to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). You may call the VAERS number 1-800-822-7967 at no charge, or report online to www.vaers.hhs.gov.

What are the ingredients of PNEUMOVAX 23?

Active Ingredients: Bacterial sugars from 23 pneumococcal types: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6B, 7F, 8, 9N, 9V, 10A, 11A, 12F, 14, 15B, 17F, 18C, 19F, 19A, 20, 22F, 23F, and 33F

Inactive Ingredients: Phenol (a preservative)

What else should I know about PNEUMOVAX 23?

Some adults and children have problems with leakage of spinal fluid after the skull is cracked or injured or after medical operations and this may increase their risk for pneumococcal infection. PNEUMOVAX 23 may not be able to prevent all of these infections.

This leaflet is a summary of information about PNEUMOVAX 23. If you would like more information, talk to your health care provider. You can also call the Merck National Service Center at 1-800-622-4477.

Rx Only

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