

Diabetes And Pneumonia: Get the Facts

Did you know that a pneumococcal (new-mo-Koc-kal) shot (or pneumonia shot) can be a lifesaver if you have diabetes? People with diabetes are about 3 times more likely to die with flu and pneumonia. Yet, only one third of them ever get a simple, safe pneumonia shot.

Pneumonia is a serious illness for anyone, but if you have diabetes, you are more likely to be sicker longer, go to the hospital, or even die. One pneumonia shot can help protect you against getting sick.

Who Should Get The Pneumonia Shot? A pneumonia shot is recommended for anyone aged 2 or older who, because of chronic health problems (such as diabetes) or age, has a greater chance of getting and dying with pneumonia.

Extra Protection A pneumonia shot can also protect you against other infections caused by the same bacteria.

Consider the risks everyone faces:

- 1 out of 20 adults who get pneumonia (a lung infection) dies
- 2 out of 10 adults who get infection of the blood (bacteremia) die
- 3 out of 10 adults who get infection of the covering of the brain (meningitis) die

About 10,000 people die each year because of these bacterial infections. A pneumonia shot, however, can help protect you against getting these illnesses. In fact, it is about 60% effective in preventing the most serious pneumonias, meningitis, bacteremia, and death.

Is The Shot Safe?

The pneumonia shot is very safe. It does not contain any live bacteria, which means there is no way to get pneumonia from the shot.

People may have mild redness or swelling in the arm where the shot was given. This goes away in a day or two.

A pneumonia shot is available through your doctor's office, your community health clinic, hospitals, and some worksite programs. You can get it anytime during the year. For most people, one shot is enough protection for a lifetime. People under 65 who have a chronic illness or a weakened immune system should ask their doctor about getting another shot 5—10 years after their first one.

Where And When To Get A Shot

Will Insurance Cover The Shot?

The pneumonia shot is covered by Medicare Part B and by some other health insurance plans.

Remember . . .

You may already be planning to get a flu shot this fall—another lifesaver for people with diabetes.

Ask your doctor about getting a pneumonia shot at the same time.

