



Direct Remedies

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Contact: 0845 130 4595 or jabs@directremedies.com

Pevnar (Prevenar): The 7 valent Pneumococcal vaccine

Benefits.

The pneumococcus is a bacteria that causes serious infections in adults and children, including pneumonia, blood infections, and meningitis. This bacteria is also the number one cause of sinusitis and ear infections. The 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (23PS) protects against many different types of the pneumococcus bacteria and it is recommended that to be given to people over age 65 and children over age two who are at high risk.

Unfortunately, 23PS does not provide protection for children under age two, but a newer version of the vaccine, **Pevnar or Prevenar**, or heptavalent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV7), is available and can be given to younger children. It was approved by the FDA (USA) in February 2000, and is currently approved by the UK authorities (The MHRA) for use in the UK. Pevnar protects against the seven most common strains of Pneumococcus that cause invasive disease, including bloodstream infections and meningitis.

Pevnar is now part of the routine immunization schedule in the UK for children less than 1 year of age. There are no current plans to offer it to older children by the NHS.

It is also included in immunization programme in many developed countries including USA and Australia. The American Academy of Paediatrics recommends the routine use of Pevnar for **all children 23 months and younger**, and for children aged 24 to 59 months who are at **high risk**, including children with an immune deficiency, sickle cell disease, asplenia (children without a working spleen), HIV infection, chronic cardiac conditions, chronic lung problems (including asthma), cerebrospinal fluid leaks, chronic renal insufficiency (including nephrotic syndrome), diabetes mellitus, and children who are receiving immunosuppressive therapy.

Although it is approved for use up to age 9, it is recommended that Pevnar not be routinely given to children over 5 years old. It would be more appropriate to use the 23 valent (23PS) alternative in older children who are at risk of severe pneumococcal disease.

Pevnar **may** also reduce the number of ear infections a child has in children with a history of recurrent ear infections, but this effect is estimated at only a 10% to 20% reduction. Remember that this is not an ear infection vaccine.

Risks or side-effects.

The most common **adverse effects** of Pevnar (Prevenar) include:

- Injection site reactions such as swelling, or redness,
- fever (>38°C/100.4°F),
- irritability, drowsiness, restless sleep,
- decreased appetite,
- vomiting and/or diarrhoea,
- rash or hives.

It may interfere with the effectiveness of other vaccines such as Measles or Whooping-cough. A gap of at least 3 weeks between Pevnar and any other vaccine is essential to minimise this.

Dosing Schedule.

Pevnar is given as a **four dose series**, starting at two months of age. Subsequent doses are given at age four months and six months of age, with a fourth dose at age 12-15 months (at least two months after the third dose).

If your child is starting the course between 7 and 11 months of age he/she needs only 3 doses 6 to 8 weeks apart.

If he/she is starting at 12 to 23 months age: give 2 doses 6 to 8 weeks apart.

Recommended dosing schedule for Prevnar*:		
Age 1st Dose	Primary Series	Booster Dose
2-6 months	3 doses, 6-8wk gap	12-15 months
7-11 months	2 doses, 6-8wk gap	12-15 months
12-23 months	2 doses, 6-8wk gap	none
24-59 months	1 dose	if high risk**

If he/she is more than 2 years old: give 1 dose only.

**high risk children (such as children with deficient immunity diagnosed by a specialist) aged 24-59 months should receive a booster dose of Prevnar 6-8 weeks after their first dose. They should also receive one dose of 23PS 6-8 weeks later, and another dose of 23PS in 3-5 years.

Further Information.

The consultant will be able to answer any further questions you have about this vaccine during the appointment. Alternatively call **0845 130 4595** for access to the call centre for advice and dates / costs.

Approved and Written: **Dr.D.D.Ratnasinghe.**

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