



WHY YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE TO WAIT TO GET HIS OR HER THIRD OR FOURTH DOSE OF PREVNAR® VACCINE: FACTS FOR PARENTS

Key Facts

- At this time, there is a low supply of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, also called Prevnar®. This vaccine protects children against serious disease and death caused by bacteria called *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.
- Because of low supplies, it is important to take steps to make sure all children get some Prevnar® vaccinations.
- While supplies are low, your healthcare provider has been asked to wait to give most children their 3rd and 4th doses of Prevnar® vaccine. Children whose 3rd or 4th dose is delayed should receive it on their first doctor's visit after supplies return to normal.
- Four doses of Prevnar® vaccine provide the best protection, but your child will still have a very high level of protection if he or she has had three doses. Children who have had two doses of Prevnar® should also have some protection, but the exact level is not known.
- Children with certain health conditions, like sickle cell anemia or immune system disorders, are more prone to *Streptococcus pneumoniae* infections. Such children should still get all four shots.
- By temporarily not giving the third and fourth doses of Prevnar® vaccine to healthy children, healthcare providers will save many doses of vaccine. As a result, there should be enough vaccine for all children to get at least two doses.
- Experts do not know exactly when supplies of Prevnar® vaccine will be back to normal. They expect supplies to be limited for several more months.

More Information

Vaccinating your children is one of the most important ways you can protect them from infectious diseases. Children should get certain vaccines when they reach certain ages, according to the recommended immunization schedule. Vaccinating children on time helps to give them the best protection possible.

Prevnar® is one of the vaccines in the recommended childhood immunization schedule. This vaccine protects against disease caused by bacteria called *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. This bacteria can cause serious illness, including meningitis (an infection of the covering of the brain), blood stream infections, and infection of the lungs. *Streptococcus pneumoniae* can infect anyone, but is most likely to cause serious infection in infants and in children with certain medical conditions. Infants and toddlers should usually get four doses of Prevnar®, one dose at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 12-15 months of age.

Once in a while in the U.S., we do not have enough vaccine to vaccinate all children on time. When this happens, doctors may need to make temporary changes in their patient's vaccination

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schedules. This is done to help save vaccines and ensure that the children most in need of protection get it. In February 2004, doctors and other experts became worried that the supply of Plevnar[®] would be low for several months.

Steps have been taken by the vaccine manufacturer and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in an attempt to prevent healthcare providers from running out of Plevnar[®] vaccine. These steps have worked so far, but more needs to be done.

CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) have decided to recommend that doctors continue to give all children the first two doses of Plevnar[®] vaccine but that they stop, for now, giving healthy children the third and fourth doses scheduled to be given at 6 months and 12-15 months of age.

Delaying the third and fourth doses of Plevnar[®] is not ideal. However, this step will help make sure that all children get at least two doses of the vaccine. Doctors and other experts believe that giving all children two vaccinations will result in less disease than if some children get 3 or 4 doses while others get none.

Children with certain health conditions that make them more prone to *Streptococcus pneumoniae* infections should still get all four shots. Your healthcare provider can help determine if your child has a health condition that puts him or her at increased risk.

If we did not delay the 3rd and 4th doses of Plevnar[®] for most children, there would probably be widespread, serious shortages. If this happened, some children might not get any doses of the vaccine. By not giving the third and fourth doses routinely, we expect to save a large amount of vaccine so that all children will be protected with at least two doses.

CDC, AAP, and AAFP continue to watch the vaccine supply situation closely. No other routine childhood vaccines are in short supply so your child should continue to receive all the other vaccines on the normal schedule. More information about vaccine shortages is available at www.cdc.gov/nip/news/shortages. Information about what vaccines your child should receive can be found at www.cdc.gov/nip/kidstuff.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/nip, or call the CDC National Immunization Information Hotline (800) 232-2522 (English), (800) 232-0233 (Español), or (800) 243-7889 (TTY)
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