



Patterson and Tedford Pediatrics

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Updated vaccine recommendation for the conjugated pediatric pneumococcal vaccine (aka Prevnar®)

Nearly a decade ago American infants and toddlers began receiving a new FDA approved vaccine (PCV7) to prevent ear infections, sinus infections, pneumonia and meningitis caused by seven strains of the pneumococcal bacteria. The vaccine has been both very effective and very safe. Serious infections caused by this germ have decreased dramatically.

In February of this year a new and improved version (PCV13) of this vaccine was licensed by the FDA and recommended by the Advisory Committee of Immunization Practices.

The updated version of the vaccine further expands protection of the vaccine by “covering” the 13 strains of the pneumococcal bacteria that cause most of the childhood illnesses. PCV13. Once its use is widespread it should make pneumococcal infections in childhood even less frequent and decrease the use of antibiotics prescribed to fight this dangerous bacteria. The vaccine is approved for children between 6 weeks and 71 months.

The licensure of PCV-13 has changed the standard pediatric immunization schedule as it replaces the PCV7 that has been in use for almost 10 years. Like PCV7, PCV13 contains no thimerosal preservative and extensive pre-licensure studies suggest that it will be very well tolerated (just like PCV7 has been) and produce high levels of protective levels of antibodies.

- ◆ **For infants who have yet to begin their immunizations:**

PCV-13 will be routinely administered at the 2,4,6, and 12-15 month check ups. Parents need not take any specific action. A vaccine information sheet will provided at the time your child is immunized.

- ◆ **For infants and children who have started pneumococcal immunization with PCV7 (aka Prevnar®):**

PCV13 will simply replace PCV7 for all the remaining pneumococcal vaccines due. Parents will receive a vaccine information sheet about PCV 13 at the time of vaccination. Parents need not take any specific action.

- ◆ **For children who have completed the series of four PCV7 vaccines AND are under the age of 5 years:**

PCV13 will be given as a single booster dose. This booster dose will ensure that all children will receive that full benefit of this updated and improved version of pneumococcal vaccination.

- ◆ **For healthy children who are >5 years old vaccination with PCV13 is NOT recommended.**

Children over 5 effectively “handle” infections with the pneumococcal bacteria without the benefit of vaccination.

Please feel free to ask our staff if you have any questions about this important public health advance in preventative health care for your children. BDP

PTP has scheduled special dedicated vaccine clinics to accommodate toddlers and preschoolers who have not yet received the PCV13 vaccine. Please call to schedule ASAP.
