Now is the time to learn all you can about pneumococcal disease and flu.
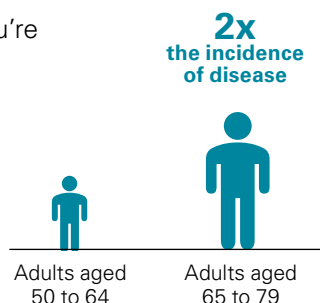
About Pneumococcal Disease

You may have heard of pneumonia, which has many different causes. Infection with a certain bacterium called pneumococcus can be one of them. Infection with this bacterium can cause different types of diseases, which could affect the lungs, the lining of the brain, the spinal cord, and blood. Many adults carry the bacteria that cause pneumococcal disease in their nose and throat. In some cases, they may multiply and travel throughout your body, causing infections that can make you very sick. Pneumococcal disease can be very serious. It can lead to hospitalization and, in rare cases, may even cause death.

The Age Factor

The older you get, the more you're at risk of developing serious pneumococcal disease.

- Adults aged 65 to 79 years have double the incidence rate of disease compared to those aged 50 to 64

2x
the incidence of disease

Adults aged 50 to 64   Adults aged 65 to 79

The Risk

People in the following groups are at increased risk for pneumococcal diseases. Check the box(es) that apply to you:

- 65 years of age or older, OR
- 2 to 64 years of age with any of the following health problems:

☐ Heart disease

☐ Diabetes

☐ Lung disease

☐ Certain types of cancer

☐ Receiving medication or radiation treatment that affects the immune system

☐ HIV/AIDS

☐ Whose spleen has been removed or does not work

☐ Sickle cell disease (a certain blood disorder)

☐ Kidney disease

☐ Organ or bone marrow transplant

☐ Liver disease

☐ Alcoholism

☐ Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks (leakage of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord).

About Flu

Typically, flu season runs from late fall to early spring. Flu viruses can cause:

- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- dry cough

Flu can cause one or more of the symptoms listed above. People with H1N1 flu have also reported diarrhea and vomiting.

These viruses are spread mainly from person to person when an infected person coughs and sneezes. You may also get flu by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching your mouth or nose.

To help prevent flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others.

Your health care provider can answer your questions about these diseases and whether you're at risk.