Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Pneumococcal Vaccination Guidelines for Adults with Cancer

This information explains pneumococcal vaccines and when you should receive them.

Pneumococcal vaccines help prevent infection by pneumococcal bacteria. This bacteria can cause pneumonia (lung infection), meningitis (inflammation in the membranes around your brain), and other serious illnesses that can cause death.

There are 2 types of pneumococcal vaccines: Prevnar 13® and Pneumovax®23. Both of these vaccines protect against multiple strains of bacteria. They are given as an injection (shot) into your muscle.

Vaccine Schedule

If you have never received a pneumococcal vaccine and you are over 18 years of age, we recommend that you receive:

- Prevnar 13 at your next appointment with your healthcare provider.
- Pneumovax 23 at least 8 weeks after Prevnar 13.

If you already received Pneumovax 23, wait 1 year before you get Prevnar 13.

Talk with your healthcare provider if you have any questions about pneumococcal vaccines.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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