



Gila County  
Health & Emergency Management

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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## Pneumococcal Disease Fact Sheet

### Background

Pneumococcal disease, an infection caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria, may cause middle ear infection, pneumonia, meningitis (inflammation of the coverings of the brain and spinal column) or bacteremia (a bloodstream infection). Pneumococcus is one of the most common causes of severe pneumonia. Vaccines may prevent pneumococcal disease in children and adults.

### Symptoms

Symptoms generally include an abrupt onset of fever and shaking or chills. Other symptoms may include headache, cough, chest pain, disorientation, shortness of breath, weakness, and occasionally a stiff neck.

### Transmission

Pneumococcal bacteria spread from person to person by direct contact with respiratory secretions, like saliva or mucus. Pneumococcal bacteria are frequently found in the nose and on the skin of healthy adults and children without causing illness.



### Treatment

Pneumococcal disease is treated with antibiotics. However, many types of pneumococcal bacteria have become resistant to penicillin; in some areas of the United States, up to 15% of invasive pneumococcal infections are resistant to penicillin.

### Prevention

A vaccine for children and adults, called pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13 or Prevnar 13<sup>®</sup>), protects against the 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria that cause most of the severe illness in children and adults. The vaccine can also help prevent some ear infections. PCV13 protects children and adults by preparing their bodies to fight the bacteria. PCV13 is recommended for adults 19 years or older who have certain medical conditions, and in all adults 65 years or older.



Covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing and frequent handwashing will also prevent the spread of *S. pneumoniae* and other bacteria and viruses.

### For more information

If you need more information, please contact your primary care physician or Gila County Division of Health & Emergency Management at (928) 402-8811.