

Important information for patients
with cardiovascular disease

Protect your heart from pneumococcal disease



Why it's important to protect yourself from this
bacterial infection

Pneumococcal bacteria can cause serious illnesses, including pneumonia, meningitis or septicaemia. The risk of complications is significantly higher in people with heart disease.

The most common symptoms of pneumococcal pneumonia include:

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|  A sudden onset of high fever with chills |  Feeling of being unwell, fatigued and pain in the chest when breathing |
|  A productive cough with shortness of breath or rapid breathing | |

An infection with consequences – including for your own heart

-  People aged 60 and over, as well as those with chronic cardiovascular disease, are at significantly increased risk of severe pneumococcal disease.
-  Pneumococcal pneumonia can place additional strain on the heart and cause existing heart failure to worsen acutely.
-  In the first few weeks and months following pneumococcal pneumonia, the risk of heart attack and stroke is increased – inflammation can also affect the blood vessels and the heart.

Good for your heart:

Protection against pneumococcal disease through vaccination

A pneumococcal vaccination can help protect against severe illness and complications. Whether vaccination is recommended depends on your individual risk and personal circumstances.

The Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) recommends pneumococcal vaccination for:

- ♥ Everyone aged 60 and over
- ♥ People with chronic cardiovascular disease, or other underlying health conditions or a weakened immune system regardless of age
- ♥ Infants and toddlers as part of the routine childhood vaccination programme. A booster dose during childhood is not required.

Good reasons to get vaccinated against pneumococcal disease:

- ♥ Protection against severe pneumococcal disease such as pneumonia, meningitis or blood poisoning
- ♥ Reduced risk of cardiovascular complications and stabilisation of existing heart failure
- ♥ Can be given at the same time as the flu or COVID-19 vaccination, if needed

Talk to your cardiologist about your pneumococcal vaccination status.

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