

# Children medically at risk and immunisations

Children with high-risk medical conditions are among the most susceptible to pneumococcal infection and influenza and are more likely to be hospitalised with severe disease. Immunisation is a safe and effective way to reduce this risk.

Some of these high-risk medical conditions include:

- cystic fibrosis
- chronic heart, lung, liver, or kidney conditions
- haemoglobinopathies
- weakened immune systems (immunodeficiency/immunosuppressive medication)
- children born prematurely (less than 28 weeks)
- trisomy 21
- diabetes mellitus
- cochlear implants
- intracranial shunt
- previous episodes of invasive pneumococcal disease.

Pneumococcal disease is caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, more commonly known as pneumococcus. It is responsible for childhood infections ranging from middle ear and sinus infection to severe bacterial infections including meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain), severe pneumonia (lung infection) and/or sepsis (blood stream infection).

Influenza, commonly called “the flu”, is caused by the influenza virus and can easily spread within families and the community. Influenza can result in severe pneumonia encephalitis (brain infection) and/or life-threatening sepsis.

## Which immunisations should my child receive if they are medically at risk?

Children who are medically at-risk require additional pneumococcal vaccines, as listed below, as well as a **yearly** flu vaccine, in addition to receiving timely immunisations on the standard WA schedule (all these vaccines are provided for free).

## Children diagnosed with a medical risk condition prior to 12 months of age:

- 4 doses of a pneumococcal vaccine are recommended.
- Follow the WA Immunisation Schedule. The additional dose of pneumococcal vaccine will be given at your child’s scheduled vaccine visit at 6 months of age.



Children and adolescents diagnosed with a medical risk condition at or after 12 months of age:

- Eligible for an additional dose of a pneumococcal vaccine at diagnosis.

Children and adolescents who have previously received pneumococcal vaccines:

- Talk to your health professional to see if your child is recommended to receive any additional doses of a pneumococcal vaccine.

Where can we get these recommended immunisations?

Visit the PCH Stan Perron Immunisation Centre, Level 1, Clinic D. Open weekdays, 8.30am to 4pm (**free of charge, no appointment or referral required**).

Alternatively visit your local immunisation provider or GP.

Email [PCH.ImmunisationCentre@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:PCH.ImmunisationCentre@health.wa.gov.au) or phone 6456 2222 for further advice.



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Child and Adolescent Health Service



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Produced by: Infectious Diseases  
Ref: 1088 © CAHS 2025

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