If you're **65** or older, it's time to get your pneumococcal shots.

NEW YORK STATE | **Department of Health**

If you're 65 or older, you need two pneumococcal shots. These vaccines will protect you from pneumococcal disease, a serious bacterial infection.

Who needs pneumococcal vaccines?

- All adults 65 and older need two pneumococcal shots: the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) and the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23).

- Some adults who are 19 to 64 will need two pneumococcal shots - both PCV13 and PPSV23. They are adults who have a medical condition, or take medicine or treatment that lowers the body's resistance to infection; those who have a damaged spleen, no spleen or sickle cell disease, and those who have a cochlear implant or leaks of cerebrospinal fluid.

- Adults 19 to 64 who have chronic medical conditions such as: heart disease, lung disease, asthma, diabetes, alcoholism, cirrhosis, or who are smokers, will need one pneumococcal shot - PPSV23.

How many shots will I need?

If you get pneumococcal vaccines for the first time at 65 or older, you will need two shots, one year apart.

If you've had only one pneumococcal vaccine in your lifetime, you may now need an additional shot.

If you had the pneumococcal vaccine before you were 65, you may now need one or two additional shots.

If you're not sure whether you've had the pneumococcal vaccine or how many doses you've had, contact your health care provider.

Is it safe?

These vaccines are safe and effective. You can get the shots at any time of the year and most people have no side effects.

What is pneumococcal disease?

It is a severe bacterial infection that can affect your lungs, blood and brain. Older adults are at high risk for complications from both this disease and the flu. Therefore, it's best to get both shots.

Pneumococcal disease causes your lungs to become inflamed and makes it harder to breathe (pneumonia). Thousands of older adults are hospitalized with pneumococcal disease every year. Half of all deaths from this disease are among people 65 and older.

Symptoms

Pneumococcal disease usually causes a fever, cough and shortness of breath. If it infects the brain (meningitis), it causes a headache, stiff neck and confusion or sleepiness. It can also lead to bacteremia, a bloodstream infection.

Complications

People of all ages can get pneumococcal disease, but it is especially dangerous for older adults. Your risk of serious illness or death is even higher if you have one or more of these chronic conditions:

- Lung disease (for example, emphysema)
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Kidney disease

The best way to prevent pneumococcal disease is to get vaccinated. You can further protect yourself by getting a flu shot every year, eating well, being physically active and staying tobacco-free.