



# Jefferson County PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

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## Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Don't Subject Yourself or Your Children to Pneumococcal Disease**

**Watertown, NY – June 10, 2013** ~ The Jefferson County Public Health Service (JCPHS) is encouraging everyone to learn about the need for pneumococcal vaccines and to receive the vaccine, if needed. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **pneumococcal disease can be deadly** and in some cases it can cause long-term problems such as brain damage, loss of hearing, and loss of arms or legs. Pneumococcal disease is worldwide, mostly affecting young children, the elderly and people of any age who have a chronic illness. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are over 700,000 deaths per year, worldwide among children under the age of 5 caused by pneumococcal disease.

Pneumococcal disease is caused by a bacterium called *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (pneumococcus). This bacterium can cause a variety of infections, such as pneumococcal pneumonia, bacteremia, meningitis, and otitis media. Pneumococcal pneumonia (an infection in the lungs) is characterized by fever, cough, shortness of breath and pain in the chest. Pneumococcal meningitis (disease of the brain) can include being confused, being sensitive to light, having a stiff neck, fever and nausea. Pneumococcal bacteremia (an infection of the blood) may have some of the same signs as pneumonia and meningitis, along with pain of the joints and chills. Otitis media (middle ear infection) is another type, which can include a painful ear, a red or swollen eardrum, sometimes not being able to sleep, a fever and being irritable.

The pneumococcus bacterium is common in the nose and the throat. The bacterium is spread by coughing, sneezing, or coming in contact with fluids caused by breathing.

Pneumococcal disease can be prevented by two vaccinations: pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) and the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23). PCV13 is routinely given to infants in four doses at the ages of 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 12 through 15 months. If children miss these shots or start the shots later, they should still receive the shots. Providers can give details about making up these vaccines. The PPSV23 should be given to anyone that is 65 or older. People between the ages of 2 years and 64 years, who have long-term illnesses, should also get PPSV23. PPSV23 should also be given to anyone 2-64 years of age, if they are taking medicine that reduces their infection fighting ability. Adults, 19-64 years of age, who smoke or have asthma, should get PPSV23. Lastly, people who live in nursing homes or long-term care facilities should get PPSV23.

The JCPHS encourages adults to use [www.jcphs.org](http://www.jcphs.org) to check if all their vaccinations are up to date. Adult vaccinations include influenza, tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap), pneumococcal, hepatitis A, meningococcal, and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). If you travel to other countries you may need additional vaccinations. JCPHS provides travel vaccines by appointment. The JCPHS also holds immunization clinic every Wednesday from 12:30-3:30pm on a walk-in basis for adults and children needing routine vaccinations. JCPHS will have expanded immunization clinic hours, 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM, for the first Wednesday of July, August and September.

Written in conjunction with: Tess Anderson, SUNY Potsdam Community Health Intern

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