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#### For people with asthma:

Pneumococcal disease can be very serious. It may be because the airways in people with asthma are more likely to be affected by infection. Corticosteroids, a common asthma medicine, may also increase your risk.

**You can spread the bacteria before you even know you are sick.**

You can acquire the pneumococcal bacteria by direct contact with someone who has it. It is spread through mucus or saliva, such as from someone who does not cover their face when sneezing or coughing.

The best way you can avoid getting pneumococcal disease is to get vaccinated.

#### Note:

We would like to thank the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) for permitting us to include their patient education material in our products.

**For more information, please contact the Allergy and Immunology Awareness Program (AIAP) at:**

[AIAP@hamad.qa](mailto:AIAP@hamad.qa)  
<http://aiap.hamad.qa>



# Asthma and Pneumococcal Infection

## Allergy and Immunology Awareness Program



#### Patient and Family Education

@ [patienteducation@hamad.qa](mailto:patienteducation@hamad.qa)

## Asthma and Pneumococcal Infection

### People with asthma need to take extra precautions to avoid pneumococcal disease

Pneumococcal disease is a serious bacterial infection that can cause pneumonia, meningitis, bloodstream infections and ear infections.

For people with asthma, pneumococcal bacteria can be very serious. If pneumococcal bacteria spreads to your lungs, it can cause **pneumonia**.



### The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) recommends the pneumococcal vaccine if you have asthma.

**Get the pneumococcal vaccine.** There are two types available. Adults with certain medical conditions may need both vaccines. This includes adults with asthma who take corticosteroids. You do not need the pneumococcal vaccine every year, like the flu shot. You may only need to get it once and get a booster shot a few years later. Talk with your doctor to find out what is best for you.

**Make it a family affair.** Have family members without asthma get the pneumococcal vaccine to protect those that do have asthma.

**Prevent exposure.** The bacteria are spread through coughing, sneezing or direct contact, like kissing. If possible, avoid people who are sick. Not everyone who carries the bacteria gets sick from it. That means it is possible to catch it from someone who seems to be healthy.

**Talk to your health care provider.** Update your asthma action plan with your healthcare providers so that you know what to do if you get sick.

**If you get sick with pneumonia or other pneumococcal disease symptoms, call your doctor immediately.** People with asthma can quickly become sicker.

### Common Pneumococcal symptoms:

Symptoms usually appear suddenly. Call your doctor right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- Fever
- Difficulty breathing
- Cough (you may cough up greenish or yellow mucus)
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating and chills
- Stiff neck
- Disorientation (confusion)

### Who is at risk?

Anyone can get pneumococcal disease. But certain people are at higher risk, such as:

- Children younger than 12 years old
- Adult 65 and older
- Adults with weak immune systems
- Adults who smoke
- Anyone with a chronic disease, such as asthma or other lung diseases