

# Pneumococcal Vaccine

"Hey dad, I was just reading about the pneumococcal vaccine.

Have you gotten yours yet?"

"Pneu-mo-coc-cal, what?"

"I'm taking that as a 'no'.

Well ... it's a vaccine that can help prevent a type of fast-spreading bacteria from causing some really bad infections ...

you know, the kind that can make you really sick... or, even worse ...

If the infection gets into your lungs, brain, or blood ... you could die."

"You know, I've lived over half my life ... I've never needed the vaccine."

"Well, it says here that people 65 and older are more likely to get sick from the bacteria and have to go to the hospital.

The same is true for people that smoke, have a weak immune system, or have a health problem like COPD, heart disease, or diabetes."

"I'm healthy ... I watch what I eat, I exercise ... I'll take my chances."

"I know you're healthy, but you still need to be protected from this.

And the vaccine is the best way."

"But I never get sick. And if I do, I'll just go to the doctor and ask for an antibiotic."

"You can't count on the antibiotics.

It even says here that some kinds of bacteria are strong ...

and that antibiotics may not be able to fight the pneumococcal infection."

"So you're saying I won't get sick if I get the shot?"

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"Well ... you could.

But if you do, you won't be as sick as someone who didn't get the shot.

C'mon, Dad. A shot instead of being sick for weeks or having to go to the hospital?

It may save your life.

So what are you really worried about?"

"It sounds like a hassle.

And I'm not that wild about needles ...

or about getting some kind of reaction to the vaccine ...

You know, I've heard that can happen."

"What about all those shots you made me get as a kid?

I mean, let's be fair. And Dad ... you're tough.

The shot doesn't take much time ... and then you're done.

Most people only have to get the vaccine once in their life.

And, as for having a bad reaction ... I don't have all the answers.

But your doctor can help explain what to expect.

But everything I've read has said that vaccines are very low risk.

Your arm might get a little red or sore ... and in rare cases, you might get a fever or rash ... but that's it."

"So, you're saying I may only have to get one quick shot ...

It could help keep me from getting really sick ... And it's low risk. Hmmm ..."

"I would sure feel better knowing you're safe from these nasty bacteria.

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So, what do you say?"

"Well, you've given me a lot to think about ... and I will ... think about it.

How does that sound?"

"Sounds good to me!"

You may need more than one vaccine to protect yourself from pneumonia.

Your doctor can help you decide which vaccines you need and when.