



AMERICAN COCHLEAR IMPLANT ALLIANCE

Research. Advocacy. Awareness.

Pneumococcal Meningitis Vaccination for Adult Cochlear Implant Candidates or Recipients

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the pneumococcal meningitis vaccination for adult cochlear implant candidates and recipients. The Centers for Disease Control's initial recommendation for inoculation applied to children only. Upon further research, the CDC revised their recommendation for pneumococcal meningitis vaccination to include adult cochlear implant recipients as well as children. These recommendations are based on Food and Drug (FDA) studies of vaccine effectiveness in immunocompetent patients that indicate the vaccine regimen has been proven to be effective in preventing meningitis in cochlear implant recipients. For more information visit: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2015.pdf> or <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/m2e731a1.htm>

Access to pneumococcal meningitis vaccine

ACI Alliance received notice that some adult candidates were being denied the Prevnar 13 vaccine (one of the vaccines for pneumococcal meningitis) prior to their cochlear implant surgery if they were younger than the vaccine's typically recommended age category of 65 years.

To explore whether this was widespread, we made a number of telephone calls to ask about availability "for a relative." Based on our research, which covered three different states, we found no incidences in which an individual would have been refused access to the vaccine (even if they were under age 65). The pharmacy chains we contacted—CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, Safeway, and Giant Foods (the latter being a DC area grocery chain with pharmacy services), all confirmed that the vaccine was reliably available for cochlear implant candidates and recipients.

Recommendations

Considering the feedback from a number of pharmacists that we spoke to, we recommend that individuals bring a prescription from their physician to the pharmacy when seeking the Prevnar 13 vaccination. In addition, we recommend that individuals contact their insurance company prior to receiving the vaccination confirming coverage benefits. Additional documentation from the physician may be required for coverage.

In summary, we are pleased to confirm availability of the pneumococcal meningitis vaccination for adult cochlear implant candidates and recipients. If you or a family member encounters difficulty in obtaining the vaccine from a local pharmacy, we recommend having the pharmacy contact the cochlear implant physician. In addition, you can provide the pharmacy with the CDC recommendations available at the website above.