PHARMACY **BENEFACT**

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A BULLETIN FOR PHARMACY SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM ALBERTA BLUE CROSS®

Pneumococcal vaccine: Incorrect administration intervals and eligibility reminder

During a recent immunization data review, Alberta Health learned that some Albertans have received the pneumococcal vaccine with inappropriate intervals between doses, and that there may be some misunderstanding around vaccine eligibility for Albertans.

Minimum intervals for pneumococcal vaccines

Make sure to follow the minimum time intervals between doses of pneumococcal vaccines:

- Pneu-C20 (pneumococcal conjugate 20-valent vaccine or Prevnar 20) should be given **at least one year** after receiving Pneumo-P (pneumococcal polysaccharide 23-valent vaccine or Pneumovax 23).
- Pneu-C20 should be given **at least eight weeks** after receiving pneumococcal conjugate vaccine eg. Pneu-C13 (Prevnar 13), Pneu-C15 (Vaxneuvance) or a previous dose of Pneu-C20.

It is important to note that if the minimum intervals are not respected, the Pneu-C20 dose may be less effective, and re-immunization with Pneu-C20 is recommended.

Please review Alberta Health's ***Policy for Pharmacists Providing Pneumococcal Conjugate 20-Valent Vaccine*** which can be viewed at: **https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-immunization-policy**. This policy has recently been updated to reinforce the minimum intervals between doses.

You may also wish to review:

- The *Pneumococcal Vaccines* chapter of the Canadian Immunization Guide which can be accessed at: **https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/canadian-immunization-guide.html**, and
- Pharmacy Benefact #1185, published in June 2024.

Eligibility reminder

Most seniors who received Pneumo-P on or after turning 65 years of age are **not** eligible to receive provincially funded Pneu-C20. Only select seniors who are considered at increased risk for severe Invasive Pneumococcal Disease as per the algorithm in the Appendix of Alberta Health's ***Policy for Pharmacists Providing Pneumococcal Conjugate 20-Valent Vaccine*** can receive Pneu-C20 following a dose of Pneumo-P.

Please contact **health.imm@gov.ab.ca** if you have questions on concerns.

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Reporting dosage errors as adverse events following immunization (AEFI)

The monitoring of adverse events following immunization (AEFI) in Alberta is an important evaluation component of the provincial immunization program. AEFI reporting and monitoring is also a key contributor to public confidence in vaccine programs. The Alberta Health Services (AHS) Provincial AEFI Team has been receiving AEFI reports from pharmacists for dosage errors that did not lead to an adverse event. **Please note, AEFI reporting is only for adverse events that occur after receiving a vaccine or biological—not for reporting dosage or any other errors.** The AHS Provincial AEFI Team will not follow up with pharmacy patients when an administration error has occurred. This follow-up is the responsibility of the pharmacist. Please refer to the **Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) Policy**, **Active Surveillance and Reporting of Adverse Events following COVID-19 Immunization** and the **Adverse Event Following Immunization Reporting page** for more information on what constitutes an adverse reaction that requires reporting.

For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

780-498-8370 (Edmonton and area)
403-294-4041 (Calgary and area)
1-800-361-9632 (toll free)
FAX 780-498-8406 (Edmonton and area)
FAX 1-877-305-9911 (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims.

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