

# Pneumonia Vaccine Critical for Elderly, Even With Flu Shot

Press Release | December 2009

**A**s a population, Americans 65 and older are at high risk for complications and even death from pneumonia – even more so than from influenza. Seniors are typically aware that they need annual flu shots, yet many may be unaware that there is a vaccine for pneumonia and that they should ask their physician for it, even if they already got a flu shot.

Pneumonia is a serious infection resulting in inflammation of the lungs, which usually occurs when a person’s natural defense system is weakened in some way, such as by the flu. According to The Department of Health and Human Services article entitled “Pneumonia Prevention: It’s Worth a Shot,” seniors are especially vulnerable, since they are two to three times more likely than the general population to get a pneumococcal infection.

“Older adults, especially those with chronic illnesses or weakened immunity, may be more vulnerable to the potentially deadly effects of pneumonia and may also suffer serious side effects of treatment,” states Nancy Creadon, vice president, VaxAmerica. “That’s why it’s so important to get the word out about the vaccine – people don’t realize that pneumonia is a preventable disease.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that one out of 20 adults who contract pneumonia will die from complications. These statistics increase with the elderly since they already have a decreasing immune system and higher susceptibility to respiratory infections.

The American Lung Association and other experts are urging the pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine for these highest-risk populations. Unlike the flu vaccine, the pneumonia vaccine does not need to be administered every year. Consult your primary care physician to find out whether you have previously been vaccinated and if so when you may need to be vaccinated again. Pneumonia vaccines are available through VaxAmerica: [www.VaxAmerica.com](http://www.VaxAmerica.com).

Launched in 2008, VaxAmerica is a nationwide network of care sites enabling the safe, easy and convenient administration of preventive vaccines—even those in limited supply—to individuals or groups at a convenient location near to them. While VaxAmerica has a national reach, it is also known for its local touch, offering cost-effective vaccination solutions for patients, healthcare providers and health plans.

