

# Pneumococcal Immunization Resource Kit

## Patient Letter Template # 1

Dear Member:

As a Medical Director with **HEALTH PLAN**, it is my aim to help to keep you and your family healthy. That's why I would like you to know about the pneumococcal vaccine, which prevents serious and deadly infections. This vaccine is recommended for children younger than five years of age, people with some chronic health conditions, and adults older than 65 years of age.

As a doctor, I know how serious pneumococcal disease can be. It kills more people in the U.S. than all other diseases that vaccines prevent combined and can cause serious complications such as deafness, seizures, and brain damage. That is why I recommend that you speak with your healthcare provider about whether a pneumococcal immunization is recommended if you or a family member:

- Are younger than five years of age.
- Are older than 65 years of age.
- Have long-term health issues such as diabetes; chronic lung disease; cirrhosis; alcoholism; and heart, kidney or liver disease.
- Have conditions that impact your ability to fight disease, such as Hodgkin's disease, lymphoma, leukemia, HIV infection, or AIDS.
- Receive long-term steroids, certain cancer drugs, or radiation therapy.
- Live in a nursing home or other long-term care home.
- Are older than 19 years of and smoke and/or have asthma.

Pneumococcal vaccines work. Because of the pneumococcal vaccine that is given to children younger than 5 years of age, there are 80% fewer cases of severe cases of this disease in children. A recent study also showed that patients in the hospital who had received a pneumococcal vaccine were up to 70% less likely to develop serious cases of disease that could lead to death than those who had not.

Pneumococcal vaccines are safe. They may cause side effects but most don't last long and are minor, such as swelling where the shot is given. These side effects actually show that the vaccine is doing its job- getting your body ready to fight disease.

Protect yourself and family against pneumococcal disease. Talk to your healthcare provider about a pneumococcal immunization today. ***HEALTH PLAN ADDS INFORMATION ABOUT COVERAGE FOR PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINATIONS HERE***

To learn more about pneumococcal immunizations, visit the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Immunization Program's website at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip).

In Health, Medical Director

This customizable template was provided for use by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Please feel free to customize this letter and provide it to members.

To download additional resources for promoting pneumococcal immunizations, visit [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip).

Questions about the "Pneumococcal Immunization Resource Kit" may be directed to Julia Heinzerling, M.P.H. at [jheinzerling@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:jheinzerling@ph.lacounty.gov) or 213-351-7479.

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