In low- and middle-income countries, respiratory infections are the major causes of hospitalization and death in children under 5 years of age. Pneumococcus (Streptococcus pneumoniae) is a bacterium that causes pneumonia, meningitis, and septicemia. Pneumococcus is the main agent causing bacterial meningitis in the Region of the Americas. Among the causes of death due to pneumococcal infections, pneumonia represents 81% and meningitis 12%.

**The data**

- **Pneumonia**
  - Under 5 years old:
    - Fever
    - Rapid breathing
    - Lower chest wall retraction
    - Wheezing (although more common in viral infections)
    - Coughing and/or shortness of breath.
  - Infants and young children are more susceptible to infection. This risk returns in increase in adults over 65 years of age.
  - Other conditions, such as overcrowding, exposure to tobacco smoke, and infections followed by the respiratory tract increase susceptibility to this disease.

- **Meningitis**
  - >1 and adults:
    - Altered state of consciousness
    - Seizures
    - Headache
    - Drowsy, confused, confused state
  - <1 year:
    - Bulging at the top of the head (fontanel)
    - Seizures
    - Decreased appetite or inability to suckle or drink

**Symptoms**

- Fever
- Intolerance to light
- Stiffness of neck
- Prominent signs of hyperactivity
- Projectile vomiting (explosives)
- Irritability without other justification
- Drowsy state
- Vomiting

**Transmission**

Person-to-person via saliva and respiratory droplets.

**Transmission**

- 37 countries and territories in the region use the vaccine against pneumococcal disease (PCV).
- There are 2 vaccines used in the region depending on the number of serotypes (PCV10 and PCV13).
- One is not better than the other. Check with your health care provider to see which vaccine your country uses.

**Vaccines**

- **Vaccination Schedule 1**
  - 2 months (1st dose)
  - 4 months (2nd dose)
  - Entre 12-24 meses (3rd dose)

- **Vaccination Schedule 2**
  - 2 months (1st dose)
  - 4 months (2nd dose)
  - 6 months (3rd dose)