



Nationwide Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine Drive

Why in News

Recently, the **Union Health Minister** has launched a **nationwide expansion of Pneumococcal 13-valent Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)** with an aim **to reduce under 5 mortalities** caused due to pneumonia.

- It was launched under the **Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)** as a part of '**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**'.
- It was for the **first time in the country** that PCV would be available for universal use.

Key Points

- **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV):**
 - A Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine **containing 13 different strains of the bacterium Streptococcus pneumoniae**, used in children and studied in patients with impaired immune system for the prevention of pneumococcal disease.
 - **Conjugate vaccines** are made using a combination of two different components.
- **Pneumococcal Disease:**
 - **About:** It is a **bacterial infection caused by Streptococcus pneumoniae**, sometimes known as pneumococcus.
 - **Symptoms:** These **bacteria can cause many types of illnesses**, including pneumonia, which is an infection of the lungs. Pneumococcal bacteria are **one of the most common causes of pneumonia**.
 - **Vulnerable Population:** Children under 2 years of age, people with certain medical conditions, adults 65 years or older, and cigarette smokers are at the highest risk.
 - **Status in India:** In India, **around 16% of deaths** among children occur due to pneumonia.
 - **Pneumonia is contagious** and can be spread through coughing or sneezing. It can also be spread through fluids, like blood during childbirth, or from contaminated surfaces.
- **Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP):**
 - **Launch:**
 - The **Immunization Programme in India** was introduced in 1978 as '**Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI)**' by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
 - In 1985, the Programme was modified as '**Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)**'.
 - **Objectives of the Programme:**
 - Rapidly increasing immunization coverage,
 - Improving the quality of services,

- Establishing a reliable cold chain system to the health facility level,
 - Introducing a district-wise system for monitoring of performance, and
 - Achieving self-sufficiency in vaccine production.
- **Features:**
- **UIP prevents mortality and morbidity** in children and pregnant women **against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases**. But in the past, it was seen that the increase in immunization coverage had slowed down and it increased at the rate of 1% per year between 2009 and 2013.
 - **Nationally against 10 diseases** - [Diphtheria](#), Pertussis, Tetanus, [Polio](#), [Measles](#), Rubella, severe form of Childhood [Tuberculosis](#), [Rotavirus diarrhea](#), [Hepatitis B](#) and Meningitis & Pneumonia caused by Haemophilus Influenzae type B.
 - **Sub-nationally against 2 diseases** - Pneumococcal Pneumonia and Japanese Encephalitis; of which Pneumococcal Conjugate vaccine has been nationally expanded, while JE vaccine is provided only in endemic districts.
 - To accelerate the coverage, [Mission Indradhanush](#) was envisaged and implemented since 2015 to rapidly increase the full immunization coverage to 90%.
 - Recently, the [Intensified Mission Indradhanush \(IMI\) 3.0 scheme](#) has been rolled out to cover children and pregnant women who missed routine immunisation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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