World Pneumonia Day – 12 November 2026

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News

World Pneumonia Day is observed every year on 12 November. The Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia first observed it on 2 November 2009; it later moved to 12 November. Stop Pneumonia says pneumonia was then killing 1.2 million children a year. According to Stop Pneumonia, the 2026 theme is 'A New Era of Pneumonia Control', recognising progress in vaccines, diagnostics and treatment. Global Burden of Disease estimates say pneumonia killed 2.5 million people in 2023, including 610,000 children under five. WHO says pneumonia is the single largest infectious killer of children under five. About 16% of child deaths in India are due to pneumonia (PIB, 2021); to cut this, the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) was expanded nationwide in October 2021, and the 'SAANS' awareness campaign has run since November 2019.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Date	12 November (first held 2 Nov 2009)
Started by	Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia
2026 theme	A New Era of Pneumonia Control
Global deaths (2023)	2.5 million; 610,000 under-5s (GBD)
Main causes	Streptococcus pneumoniae, Hib (bacteria); RSV (virus)

Point	Details
First-line treatment	Amoxicillin dispersible tablets
PCV nationwide	29 Oct 2021 (Minister Mansukh Mandaviya)
SAANS	Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully – Nov 2019
Tamil Nadu	PCV – 13 July 2021, launched at the Poonamallee urban PHC

Background

- Science: pneumonia is an acute infection of the lungs; the tiny air sacs (alveoli) fill with pus and fluid instead of air, making breathing painful and cutting oxygen intake. In children the commonest bacterial cause is Streptococcus pneumoniae, the second is Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), and the commonest viral cause is RSV (WHO).
- Prevention: vaccines against Hib, pneumococcus, measles and whooping cough are the most effective prevention; exclusive breastfeeding for six months, good nutrition and less household air pollution also help. In India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) the Hib vaccine is given as 'Pentavalent' (DPT + hepatitis B + Hib); PCV is given at 6 weeks, 14 weeks and 9 months.
- Global plan: the WHO–UNICEF Global Action Plan for Pneumonia and Diarrhoea (GAPPD) follows a 'Protect, Prevent, Treat' approach. Amoxicillin is the first-line drug for bacterial pneumonia; oxygen is vital in severe cases.
- Indian policy: the Union Health Ministry launched the SAANS (Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully) campaign in November 2019; it runs every November–February. PCV was expanded nationwide on 29 October 2021, which the PIB release said would reduce child mortality by about 60%.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu: in July 2021 the Tamil Nadu government added PCV to routine immunisation, launched by the then Health Minister Ma. Subramanian on 13 July 2021 at the Poonamallee urban primary health centre; three doses at 6 weeks, 14 weeks and 9 months; he said then that about 9.23 lakh children a year need it. Parents get SMS reminders.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

World Pneumonia Day is observed every year on 12 November. The Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia first observed it on 2 November 2009; it later moved to 12 November. Stop Pneumonia says pneumonia was then killing 1.2 million children a year.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Date: 12 November (first held 2 Nov 2009); Started by: Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia; 2026 theme: A New Era of Pneumonia Control; Global deaths (2023): 2.5 million; 610,000 under-5s (GBD).

What is the background to this news?

Science: pneumonia is an acute infection of the lungs; the tiny air sacs (alveoli) fill with pus and fluid instead of air, making breathing painful and cutting oxygen intake.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. In pneumonia, which part of the lungs fills with pus and fluid, reducing oxygen intake?

A) Bronchi

B) Pleura

C) Alveoli

D) Trachea

Answer: C – Explanation: Alveoli – where oxygen and carbon dioxide are exchanged. Inflamed bronchi cause bronchitis; inflamed pleura cause pleurisy.

2. According to WHO, what is the most common cause of bacterial pneumonia in children?

A) Vibrio cholerae

B) Salmonella typhi

C) Mycobacterium leprae

D) Strep. pneumoniae

Answer: D – Explanation: Streptococcus pneumoniae (pneumococcus) – the target of PCV. Hib comes second; RSV is the commonest viral cause.

3. Protection against Hib, a cause of pneumonia, is given under India's UIP as part of which vaccine?

A) MR vaccine

B) Pentavalent

C) Rotavirus

D) BCG

Answer: B – Explanation: Pentavalent = DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) + hepatitis B + Hib. MR covers measles and rubella.

4. Tamil Nadu began giving PCV in July 2021, in three doses. At what age is its booster dose given?

A) 6 weeks

B) 9 months

C) 16–24 months

D) 5 years

Answer: B – Explanation: Primary doses at 6 and 14 weeks, booster at 9 months. 16–24 months is the first DPT booster. TN launched it at Poonamallee on 13 July 2021.

5. Which body first observed World Pneumonia Day, in 2009?

A) WHO

B) UNICEF

C) Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia

D) Gavi

Answer: C – Explanation: The Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia. WHO and UNICEF together drew up the GAPPD action plan.

Sources: Stop Pneumonia; Business Standard (12 Nov 2025); WHO fact sheet; PIB (29 Oct 2021); NHM Himachal Pradesh (SAANS); DT Next (13 Jul 2021); Lokmat Times/ANI; Gavi (16 Jul 2009); PATH; CDC EID (2012). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.