

dTap

Important information about this vaccine.

Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis



Talk to a public health nurse or your doctor before getting this vaccine if the person getting the vaccine:

- is sick now with something more serious than a cold.
- has severe allergies to any part of the vaccine.
- is severely allergic to any foods, drugs, bee stings, etc.
- has a weakened immune system.

This vaccine should not be given to someone who:

- has had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of tetanus, diphtheria, and/or pertussis containing vaccine or to a component of this vaccine.

For more information

Call your local public health office.



More serious side effects are not common. As with any immunization, unexpected or unusual side effects can occur. Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) are rare, occurring at a rate of approximately one to three reports per 1,000,000 doses of vaccine distributed.

What should you do if there is a reaction to this vaccine?

- For pain or swelling where the needle was given, place a cool damp towel on the area.
- For pain or fever, give acetaminophen (also called Tylenol®) as directed on the container.

NOTE: Acetylsalicylic acid (ASA or Aspirin®) is not recommended for persons less than 18 years of age because of the increased risk of Reye's syndrome.

- Call your local public health nurse or doctor if you have questions or if there is an unusual reaction to the vaccine.

What are Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis?

At one time, diphtheria disease was very common in Canada and tetanus (or lockjaw) caused deaths every year. Today, pertussis (whooping cough), although not common, still occurs in Alberta in all age groups. Babies and children can suffer severe complications or die from this disease. There was little anyone could do to prevent getting the bacteria that caused these diseases. With the introduction of vaccines, lives have been saved. Vaccines protect people at the time they are most likely to get the diseases and usually for many years after.

Diphtheria is caused by bacteria infecting the nose and throat. It can cause difficulty breathing and skin and ear infections. The bacteria also produce a poison that can cause paralysis or heart damage. Before routine immunization against diphtheria, it was one of the most common causes of death in children under five years of age, especially babies.

Tetanus can happen when tetanus bacteria, found in soil, gets into wounds. The bacteria makes a poison, which is absorbed by the body's muscles and causes severe spasms. Even with modern medicines, about 10 to 20 per cent of people who get tetanus die.

Pertussis is caused by bacteria infecting the lining of the airways. It is spread through direct contact with mucous or respiratory droplets of an infected person. Pertussis can cause coughing spells so severe that a child has a hard time breathing or eating. The coughing can last weeks or months.

Persons with serious complications may require hospitalization. Complications are most severe in babies. Pneumonia, convulsions, brain injury and death can occur. Adolescents with pertussis can suffer from a severe cough followed by vomiting, for as long as two months. Adolescents and adults often pass the disease to children and babies.

Who should receive the dTap vaccine?

This vaccine replaces the tetanus and diphtheria booster previously offered to grade nine students. An additional dose for tetanus and diphtheria will be required in 10 years. At this time, it is not known if a dose of pertussis vaccine will be required in 10 years as well.

The dTap vaccine is 85 per cent effective in preventing severe pertussis disease in adolescents and 84 to 100 per cent effective in preventing diphtheria and tetanus disease. It takes 10 to 14 days to build immunity.

Is the dTap vaccine safe?

Yes, this vaccine is safe. It does not contain living bacteria or viruses, and you cannot get the diseases from the vaccine. In Canada, vaccines must undergo laboratory and field-testing and pass a rigorous licensing procedure with the federal government before they are introduced. Once a vaccine is approved, every lot is tested for safety and quality. In addition, side effects are continuously monitored.

What if your child is allergic to latex or thimerosal?

They may still receive this vaccine because latex and thimerosal are not in the vaccine or the packaging.

What are the side effects of dTap vaccine?

Some people will experience mild side effects. The more common side effects are generally mild and resolve quickly. For a day or two, some people may:

- have redness, swelling and soreness in the area where the needle was given.
- get a small painless lump where the needle was given.
- have a mild fever, headache, decreased energy or general body aches.