

Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap) Vaccine

**Keep your child safe.
Get all shots on time.**

By getting all shots on time, your child can be protected from many diseases over a lifetime.

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

What is the Tdap vaccine?

The Tdap vaccine protects against three diseases:

- Tetanus
- Diphtheria
- Pertussis

The vaccine is approved by Health Canada and is provided free as part of your child's routine immunizations. Call your public health nurse or doctor to make an appointment.

Who should get the Tdap vaccine?

The Tdap vaccine is given as a single booster dose to grade 9 students. This dose strengthens or boosts the immune system to give better protection against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis to those who were immunized in early childhood.

The Tdap vaccine can also be given to children 7 years of age and older who have not been fully immunized, and to adults or immigrants who have not been immunized.

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

Benefits of Tdap Vaccine

The Tdap vaccine is the best way to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis, which are serious and sometimes fatal diseases.

When you get your child vaccinated, you help protect others as well.

Possible Reactions after the Vaccine

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get tetanus, diphtheria or pertussis.

Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, redness and swelling where the shot was given.

Acetaminophen or Tylenol® can be given for fever or soreness. ASA or Aspirin® should NOT be given to anyone under 20 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number. This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in a million people who get the vaccine.

Report serious or unexpected reactions to your public health nurse or doctor.

Who should not get the Tdap vaccine?

Speak with a public health nurse or doctor if you or your child has had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of tetanus, diphtheria, or pertussis vaccine, or any component of the vaccine.

People who developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 8 weeks of getting tetanus vaccine should not get the Tdap vaccine. GBS is a rare condition that can result in weakness and paralysis of the body's muscles.

What are Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis?

Tetanus, also called “lockjaw”, is caused by a germ (bacteria) mostly found in the soil. When the bacteria enter the skin through a cut or scrape, they produce a poison that can cause painful tightening of muscles all over the body. It is very serious if the breathing muscles are affected. Up to 2 in 10 people who get tetanus will die.

Diphtheria is a serious infection of the nose and throat. About 1 in 10 people who get diphtheria will die. The germ (bacteria) is spread through the air by persons sneezing or coughing and by direct skin-to-skin contact. The disease can result in very severe breathing problems. It can also cause heart failure and paralysis.

Pertussis, or “whooping cough”, is a serious infection of the lungs and throat. About 1 in 200 people who get pertussis will die. Pertussis can cause pneumonia, convulsions, brain damage or death. These complications are seen most often in infants. The germ (bacteria) is easily spread by coughing,

sneezing or close face-to-face contact. Pertussis can cause severe coughing that often ends with a whooping sound before the next breath. This cough can last several months and occurs more often at night.

Two of these diseases are now rare in BC because of routine childhood vaccination programs. Whooping cough still occurs but is far less common than it used to be, and in immunized people is much milder.

Mature Minor Consent

Effort is made to seek parental or guardian consent prior to immunization. Children under the age of 19 who are able to understand the risks and benefits may consent to or refuse immunizations, regardless of the parent's or guardian's wishes. It is recommended that parents/guardians and their minor children discuss immunizations beforehand, and ask the nurse or doctor any questions.

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Call the BC NurseLine to speak to a registered nurse, available 24-hours every day:

- In Greater Vancouver, call 604-215-4700
- In BC, call toll-free 1-866-215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired, call 1-866-889-4700
- Pharmacist available 5pm to 9am every day
- Translation services in over 130 languages upon request.

Visit BC HealthGuide OnLine – a world of health information you can trust at www.bchealthguide.org