



# Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap)

## What is Tdap Vaccine?

The Tdap vaccine is a safe and effective way to keep you and your child from getting very sick from the real disease. It is approved by Health Canada. The Tdap vaccine (shot) is made with a tiny amount of dead germs. Vaccines help the immune system learn how to protect itself against the real disease.

**Pregnant women who are not immunized can put their infant at risk of pertussis infection.**

## Are these diseases serious?

Tetanus, also called "Lockjaw", is caused by a toxin made by bacteria. It causes painful muscle stiffness and difficulty breathing. Up to two in 10 people who get tetanus die from the illness.

Diphtheria is caused by a toxin (poison) made by bacteria. It causes a thick coating in the back of the nose or throat that makes it hard to breathe or swallow. Up to one in 10 people who get diphtheria die from the illness.

Pertussis is caused by bacteria and is often called "whooping cough". It causes coughing spells, which can last months, and make it hard for infants and children to eat, drink, or breathe. Up to one in 200 infants who get pertussis could die.

*The best way to continue to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis in adolescence and adulthood is to get a Tdap vaccine. Everyone should get this vaccine in adolescence and then an additional booster every 10 years as an adult.*

*To protect their newborn babies, all pregnant women should get this vaccine every pregnancy regardless of last dose, preferably between 27-32 weeks of pregnancy.*

## How are these diseases spread?

Tetanus does not spread from person to person. Tetanus spores can be found everywhere since they live in:

- Dirt,
- Dust, and
- Feces.

When there is a cut or burn on the skin, spores can get into the body and cause infection.

Diphtheria and Pertussis can be spread from person to person by:

- Coughing,
- Sneezing, or
- Sharing food or drinks.

Diphtheria sometimes causes skin sores, and contact with these sores can also spread infection.



## Why should you or your child get the Tdap vaccine?

Immunization is the best way to protect you against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis.

When you are immunized you also help protect others. Someone who is vaccinated is less likely to spread infection.

When pregnant women and those around her are immunized they protect the newborn baby from getting pertussis.

## What are possible reactions to the Tdap vaccine?

Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. Most people who get the Tdap vaccine do not have any reactions.

Possible signs of reaction to the vaccine include:

- Soreness,
- Redness, and
- Swelling where the vaccine was given.

Other signs include:

- Fever,
- Headache,
- Muscle or joint soreness, and
- Drowsiness.

These are mild reactions and usually last one to two days.

## Who should NOT get the Tdap vaccine?

Speak to your health care provider.

## Who should get the Tdap vaccine?

Tdap is given as a booster dose for those already immunized as a child or to those over the age of 7 years who have never been immunized against this disease.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol® and Tempra®) can be given for fever or soreness.

ASA (Aspirin®) should **NEVER** be given to children because it can cause a severe liver and brain disease called Reye's Syndrome.

**It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is a rare possibility of a severe allergic reaction. This can include: hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips.**

If this happens after you leave the clinic, call or go to the nearest Emergency Department or your local health centre for immediate treatment.

Report any serious or unexpected side-effects to your public health nurse.

## SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN (17 or under)

Vaccine	Age				
	Birth	1 year	5 years	12-16 years booster	17 years
Tdap				✓	

## SCHEDULE FOR ADULTS (18 or over)\*

Vaccine	For adults who have never been immunized (3 doses):				All adults-Booster
	1st visit	4 wks.	8 wks.	6-12 mos.	Every 10 years
Tdap	✓		✓	✓	✓

\* Pregnant women will need a booster every pregnancy, preferably between 27-32 weeks of pregnancy.

To find out more about the Tdap vaccine contact your local health centre to speak to your public health nurse or visit the following links:

- NWT Immunization Schedule:  
<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>
- Immunize Canada:  
<https://immunize.ca>
- To keep track of your family's immunizations on your smart phone or tablet and to receive vaccine schedule reminders please download the CANImmunize App at:  
<https://www.canimmunize.ca>

Your local health care centre is located at the address below.

Place Health Centre  
contact information  
here.