



Tetanus diphtheria (Td) Vaccine

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect against some very serious infections. **The Canadian Paediatric Society and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization** strongly recommends routine immunization. Tetanus, diphtheria (Td) vaccine is a two-in-one needle. It protects against diphtheria and tetanus. It is recommended for use in persons seven years of age and older.

What is Tetanus? Diphtheria?

Tetanus or lockjaw is a serious disease that can happen if dirt with the tetanus germ gets into a cut in the skin. Tetanus germs are found in everything, usually in soil, dust, and manure. It does not spread from person to person. Tetanus causes cramping of the muscles in the neck, arms, legs and stomach, and painful convulsions which can be severe enough to break bones. Even with early treatment, tetanus kills two out of every 10 people who get it.

Diphtheria is a serious disease of the nose, throat and skin. It causes sore throat, fever and chills. It can be complicated by breathing problems, heart failure and nerve damage. Diphtheria kills one out of every 10 people who get the disease. It is passed to others through coughing and sneezing.

How well does the vaccine protect my child?

When the vaccine is given in the recommended number of shots, it protects over 95% of recipients against tetanus, over

85% against diphtheria. Vaccination also makes these diseases milder for those who may catch them.

When should Td vaccine be given?

Most people get vaccinated against tetanus and diphtheria in early childhood with a booster given every 10 years thereafter.

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. Mild pain, swelling and redness for a few days are common at the spot where the needle was given. A few people may get a mild fever, lose their appetite or feel tired for a day or two after the needle. The benefits of this vaccine are much greater than the risks associated with getting the diseases. There is no risk of a pregnant woman or anyone else catching any disease from a person who has been vaccinated recently.

Who should not get the vaccine?

Td vaccine should not be given under the following conditions:

- High fever or serious infection worse than a cold
- Serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to previous doses of this vaccine
- Severe allergy to any component of the vaccine
- Pregnancy - consult with primary health care provider
- Diagnosis of Guillain-Barre syndrome

occurring within 8 weeks of receiving vaccine containing tetanus toxoid

- Blood clotting problems after receiving diphtheria and/or tetanus vaccine

What should I do if serious side effects do occur?

Depending on urgency, you should go to your doctor/health care provider or nearest emergency department if any of the following symptoms develop within three days of getting the needle:

- Hives
- Swelling of the mouth and throat
- Trouble breathing, hoarseness or wheezing
- High fever (over 39°C or 103°F)
- Convulsions or seizures
- Other serious reactions to the vaccine

Record of Protection

After you/your child receive any vaccination, make sure the doctor/nurse updates your copy of the vaccination record card. In addition, please report the vaccination to the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit. You may mail a photocopy of your updated record to 12 Gilbertson Drive, P.O. Box 247, Simcoe, ON, N3Y 4L1, fax it to 519-426-4767, or you can update the record on line at www.hnhu.org.

For more information, please contact a member of the Vaccine Preventable Disease Team by calling the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit at 519-426-6170 or 905-318-6623.

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Simcoe:
P.O. Box 247, 12 Gilbertson Drive
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4L1
519.426.6170 or 905.318.6623

Caledonia:
282 Argyle Street South
Caledonia, ON N3W 1K7
905.318.5367