



Algonia

PUBLIC HEALTH

Santé publique Algonia

# Tetanus Diphtheria Pertussis (Tdap) Vaccine

Vaccines are one of the best advancements in public health, and a great way to protect yourself and your family against serious infections. This vaccine is one needle that protects against three different infections: tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis.

## What is Tetanus?

Tetanus or lockjaw is a disease caused by a toxin produced by bacteria. Tetanus bacteria are found in many places in the environment, including dust, soil, and manure. This bacteria can enter the body through a sore or wound. When the bacteria enters the body, a powerful toxin is produced that attacks the nervous system. This can cause people's jaw muscles to tighten making them unable to open their mouth or swallow. It causes painful spasms that begin in the jaw and neck and continue down the body, affecting other important muscles including those that help you to breathe. This can lead to death. Tetanus is not spread from person to person. Immunization against tetanus is effective but temporary. A booster is recommended every 10 years.

## What is Diphtheria?

Diphtheria is a serious and highly contagious bacterial disease of the nose, throat and skin. It causes sore throat, fever and weakness and can lead to breathing problems, heart failure and nerve damage. Diphtheria kills about 1 in every 10 people who get the disease and is passed to others through coughing or sneezing.

## What is Pertussis?

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a serious bacterial disease, particularly dangerous in infants and children. Symptoms include violent coughing, which may result in vomiting or being unable to breathe temporarily. The cough can last for weeks and make it difficult to eat, drink, or breathe. Pertussis can cause serious complications including pneumonia, brain damage, seizures, and death. This is especially dangerous for infants. Pertussis is highly contagious and can be passed from an infected person to others through coughing or sneezing.

## When Should Tdap Vaccine be Given?

- **In Adolescence** – for teenagers who are due for their booster, 10 years after their last dose of tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis containing vaccine (usually given between 4-6 years of age).
- **In Adulthood** – all adults who have not received a dose of pertussis-containing vaccine in adulthood can receive one dose of Tdap, regardless of when they last received a Tetanus-Diphtheria (Td) immunization.
- **During Pregnancy** – regardless of any previous doses of Tdap or Td, all pregnant people should receive a dose of Tdap during every pregnancy. The best time to get the vaccine is between 27 and 32 weeks of pregnancy, to allow for immunity to transfer to the baby. This will give the baby protection during the first months of life when their risk of severe illness and death is highest, and before the baby can receive their immunizations. This vaccine is safe and recommended for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- It is important that everyone who will have close contact with a new baby be up to date with their pertussis immunization.

## Possible Side Effects

You should always discuss the benefits and risks of any vaccine with your doctor or health care professional. The most common reactions are redness, tenderness and swelling where the injection was given. Fever, nausea, dizziness, and headache can also occur.

Severe allergic reactions such as hives, wheezing, trouble breathing, or swelling of the face and mouth are very rare. Call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room if you experience any of those side effects, and report them to your doctor or local public health unit.

### **How Effective is This Vaccine?**

Studies show that this vaccine is close to 100% effective at protecting against tetanus and diphtheria, and about 90% effective at preventing pertussis. Tdap immunization in pregnancy is estimated to provide protection against pertussis in 90% of newborns. Immunity declines over time and boosters of tetanus and diphtheria are recommended every 10 years.

### **Who Should Not Get This Vaccine?**

You may not be able to receive the vaccine if you:

- have a moderate or severe acute illness
- have had a past severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to this vaccine, or any component in it

### **Who Should I Talk to if I Have Any Questions?**

Contact your healthcare provider. You can also visit [www.algomapublichealth.com](http://www.algomapublichealth.com), or phone the Algoma Public Health Immunization Program at (705) 759-5409, or your local public health office.

### **Your Vaccine Record**

Your personal vaccine record should be updated after each immunization you receive. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide immunization records for their school age children to their local public health unit. Immunization Connect Ontario (ICON) is a secure system to view and report immunization information to Algoma Public Health. Visit [www.algomapublichealth.com/icon](http://www.algomapublichealth.com/icon) for details.