IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

# Tetanus, Diphtheria and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap) Vaccine

## What is tetanus?

- Tetanus is also called lockjaw.
- It is a disease that occurs when cuts, wounds or burns are infected with tetanus bacteria.
- The bacteria, which can be found anywhere there is dust, dirt, soil, or fecal matter, makes a poison which causes the muscles of the body to go into spasm.
- It can be a life-threatening disease.
- It is preventable through immunization.

## What is diphtheria?

- Diphtheria is a very serious illness caused by bacteria.
- It can cause an infection of the nose and throat which can affect breathing.
- It can cause an infection of the skin.
- It can cause heart failure or paralysis.
- Even with treatment, about 1 in 10 patients with respiratory diphtheria die. Without treatment, up to half of patients can die from the disease.
- It is preventable through immunization.

## What is pertussis?

- Pertussis is also called whooping cough and is caused by a bacteria.
- It can cause severe coughing spells that can affect breathing. The disease usually lasts 6 to 12 weeks.
- It can cause pneumonia.
- It can cause seizures, and in some cases death.
- It is preventable through immunization.

## What is the vaccine for tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis?

- Tdap is a single vaccine which protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.
- Immunization is the best way to prevent diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis.
- The vaccine is given by injection.

## Who should receive the Tdap vaccine?

In Nova Scotia, the Tdap vaccine is routinely offered to Grade 7 students as part of the School Immunization Program. If the vaccine was missed or refused in the Grade 7 School Immunization Program, people can still get the vaccine for free as part of the publicly funded vaccine program.

- One dose for people under 19 who did not get the vaccine in Grade 7.
- One dose in adulthood.
- One dose during every pregnancy.
- Primary tetanus series in those 7 years of age and older not requiring additional doses of inactivated polio vaccine

## Who should NOT receive the Tdap vaccine?

- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose or any component of Tdap vaccine.
- People who are sick or have a fever (temperature of 38.5°C/101.3°F or greater).

*Please read other side.*

**www.nshealth.ca/immunizations**

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IMMUNIZATION AFTERCARE

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***People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any vaccine there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.***

## What are the possible side effects from the vaccine?

- As with any other vaccine, the most common side effects are soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site.
- Less common side effects include mild headache, fever, diarrhea, nausea, chills, body ache, decreased energy, and sore or swollen joints.

***As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. Talk to your healthcare provider before using either of these medications as they are not recommended for people with certain medical conditions.***

### Call your healthcare provider if:

- A fever lasts longer than 24 hours.
- A fever is 38.5°C (101.3°F) or higher.
- A fever doesn't come down after acetaminophen or ibuprofen are taken.
- Other illness or symptoms occur.

## Questions?

If you have any questions about tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough, or the Tdap vaccine, please call your local Public Health office (see list of offices here: www.nshealth.ca/public-health) or your healthcare provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the following websites:

**Nova Scotia Health Public Health**
www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

**Immunize Canada**
immunize.ca

**Public Health Agency of Canada**
www.canada.ca/public-health

**Canadian Paediatric Society**
cps.ca

**811**
811.novascotia.ca

**www.nshealth.ca/immunizations**

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