IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td) 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 the tetanus-diphtheria (Td) vaccine?

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

Who should receive the Td vaccine?

- Nova Scotia's Routine Immunization Schedules for Children, Youth & Adults recommend one dose of Tdap (Td and pertussis vaccine) in adulthood, followed by Td booster doses every 10 years.

Who should NOT receive the Td vaccine?

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

Please read other side.

IMMUNIZATION AFTERCARE

Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td) Vaccine

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 Td vaccine?

- As with any other vaccine, the most common side effects are soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site.
- A small painless lump at the injection site may develop which may last up to a few weeks.

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, or the Td 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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