

Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Polio: Diseases and Vaccines

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*Tétanos, diphtérie, coqueluche et polio : renseignements
sur les maladies et les vaccins*



www.nshealth.ca

Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Polio

Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, and polio are serious (very bad) diseases. They can be prevented by getting a vaccine.

What is tetanus?

- Tetanus is a disease caused by cuts or wounds that get infected with tetanus bacteria. Tetanus bacteria is often found in dirt.
- Tetanus is also called lockjaw.
- Tetanus bacteria makes a poison that causes your muscles to spasm (contract or convulse on their own).
- Tetanus can cause death.

What is diphtheria?

- Diphtheria is a disease caused by bacteria. It is very contagious (spreads very easily from person to person).
- 1 in 10 people who get diphtheria will die of the disease.
- The symptoms of diphtheria may include:
 - › Nose and throat infection that may affect your breathing
 - › Skin infection
 - › Heart failure
 - › Paralysis (not being able to move)

What is pertussis?

- Pertussis is an infection caused by bacteria. It is also called whooping cough.
- Pertussis affects babies under 1 year of age the most severely (very badly).
- Symptoms may last from 6 to 12 weeks. They include:
 - › Very bad coughing that may affect your breathing
 - › Pneumonia (lung infection)
 - › Seizures (sudden electrical brain activity that can change how you act, move, or feel for a short time)
- Pertussis can cause death.

What is poliomyelitis (polio)?

- Polio is a disease caused by the poliovirus.
- About 1 in 200 people who get polio will get the type that causes paralysis.

- Polio may cause:
 - › Temporary paralysis or weakness
 - › Permanent disability or paralysis
 - › Paralysis that affects the muscles needed for breathing
 - › Death

What is the Tdap-IPV (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis, inactivated poliomyelitis vaccine) vaccine?

- The Tdap-IPV vaccine protects against all 4 diseases with 1 vaccine.
- Getting immunized with the Tdap-IPV vaccine is the best way to prevent tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, and polio.
- The vaccine is injected into your muscle using a needle.

Who should get the Tdap-IPV vaccine?

The Nova Scotia Immunization Schedule recommends children between 4 to 6 years old get this vaccine (1 dose before starting school).

Check with your child's primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) before they get this vaccine if:

- › your child's immune system is weak because of a medical condition or certain medications.
- › your child has a bleeding disorder or takes blood-thinning medications.

Who should NOT get the Tdap-IPV vaccine?

- Children who are sick or have a fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F).
- Children who have had a serious allergic reaction (like swelling in the face or lips, trouble breathing, a drop in blood pressure) to any part of the Tdap-IPV vaccine.
 - › If your child has had a serious allergic reaction to a part of the Tdap-IPV vaccine in the past, talk to your primary health care provider about getting the vaccine from a specialist in a clinic that can control severe reactions.

After the Tdap-IPV vaccine

- You and your child will stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes. This is in case your child has any reactions to the vaccine.
- There is a small chance of having a more serious reaction.

Possible side effects

- Common side effects include:
 - › Redness, soreness, or tenderness where the needle goes in. Your child may not want to use the arm they got their needle in as much as usual. This will go away in a few days.
 - › Feeling grumpy
 - › Not feeling as hungry as usual
 - › A small, painless lump where the needle goes in. This may last for a few weeks.
 - › A fever about 6 to 24 hours after the injection. This usually goes away within 24 hours.
- There may be more serious side effects. These are rare. They include:
 - › High fever
 - › Seizures
- Make sure you have acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) at home in case your child has a fever. Follow the instructions on the container. Your child should not take these medications if they have certain medical conditions. Talk with your child's primary health care provider about their medical history before giving them either of these medications.

Possible risks

- Some people faint (pass out) before, during, or after immunization. If your child usually faints with immunizations, tell the health care provider before they are immunized.
- Fainting can cause injuries from falling.
- Sitting or lying down for 15 minutes after you get the vaccine can help prevent fainting.

Tell your child's health care provider right away if:

- › your child feels dizzy.
- › your child has changes in their vision.
- › your child hears a ringing in their ears.

Call your child's health care provider if your child has:

- › A fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F) for more than 24 hours, or that does not get better after taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- › Seizures
- › Other symptoms

Call 911 right away if you think your child is having a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

What will happen if my child has a severe allergic reaction?

- Severe allergic reactions to Tdap-IPV vaccine are rare. If needed, your child's health care provider can give them epinephrine and call 911.
- Symptoms of anaphylaxis include:
 - › Itchy skin or hives
 - › Sneezing
 - › Stuffy nose
 - › Watery eyes
 - › Coughing or wheezing
 - › Swelling of the face and throat
 - › Flushed skin
 - › Trouble breathing
 - › Cramps
 - › Vomiting (throwing up)
 - › A fast heartbeat
 - › Dizziness or weakness
- Symptoms usually start a few minutes after immunization. They may also start a few hours after immunization.

Call 911 right away if you think the person is having anaphylaxis.

Questions?

- If you have any questions about tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, polio, or the Tdap-IPV vaccine, call Public Health or your health care provider.
- Find the phone number of the Public Health office near you:
 - › www.nshealth.ca/public-health-offices

Immunization information

- For more information about immunization and its benefits and risks, visit:

Immunize Canada

- › www.immunize.ca/diseases-vaccines
- › www.immunize.ca/parents

Public Health Agency of Canada

- › www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

Canadian Paediatric Society

- › www.cps.ca

Immunize.org

- › www.immunize.org/handouts/discussing-vaccines-parents.asp

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- › <https://811.novascotia.ca>

