

# PROTECTION FROM TETANUS, DIPHTHERIA (Td) and PERTUSSIS (Tdap)

## Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td)

Td vaccines are indicated for active immunization against tetanus and diphtheria. Td has been used for many years. Td vaccine can be used:

- For adults not vaccinated in childhood
- Prevention of tetanus infection in wound care management
- As a booster for adults every 10 years
- When necessary for emergency wound care management before 10 years have passed

## Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Tdap)

Tdap vaccines are indicated for active immunization against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. Adolescents of age 14-16 years receive Tdap vaccine in school as part of the grade 9 immunization program. Adults are considered to be a significant source of transmission of pertussis to infants and young children. An adult dose of Tdap should be offered 10 years after the adolescent booster, or if the adult has never received Tdap, with Td to be administered every 10 years thereafter. Tdap vaccine is also recommended for pregnant women between 27 and 32 weeks gestation to reduce the incidence of infant pertussis.

## What is Tetanus (lockjaw)?

Tetanus is caused by bacteria present in soil, dust and manure. The bacteria release a poison that could cause severe muscle spasms all over the body. Tightening of the jaw muscles can occur which prevents the person from opening their mouth. 60% of individuals who are diagnosed with tetanus die from it.

## What is Diphtheria?

Diphtheria is caused by bacteria that can infect the nose and throat and prevent proper breathing. It can also cause skin or ear infections and can lead to heart failure, nerve damage or even death. 10% of individuals diagnosed with Diphtheria will die from it.

## What is Pertussis?

Pertussis (whooping cough) is caused by a bacterial infection that can be very easily spread from one person to another. It causes severe coughing that interferes with breathing. Complications of pertussis include seizures, convulsions, pneumonia, brain damage and death. Individuals who have been immunized may still get the disease, but in a much milder form. Pertussis is most serious in children under the age of two.

## What are the side effects of Td and Tdap vaccines?

Side effects of Td and Tdap vaccines are mild and last only a few days after the vaccine is administered and can include mild pain, swelling and redness at the administration site, fever, loss of appetite and tiredness.

## Who should NOT get the Td or Tdap vaccine?

Anyone who has had a severe allergic reaction to any contents of the vaccine or a previous dose of this vaccine should not receive this vaccine. Individuals with a history of Guillain-Barre syndrome within 6 weeks of a previous tetanus vaccine dose should not receive this vaccine as well.

**For additional information and  
services contact the Regional Health  
Authority in your community**