

# Tetanus Immune Globulin (TIG)

## Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.

## What is tetanus immune globulin (TIG)?

TIG is made from human blood and contains antibodies to tetanus. It provides fast protection, but the protection is not long lasting.

## What is tetanus?

Tetanus is a bacterial infection that causes uncontrolled movements (spasms) in the muscles of the jaw muscles and other muscles of the body.

Tetanus can cause:

- “lock jaw” where the mouth stays closed and cannot open widely
- trouble swallowing and breathing, seizures, and death

Tetanus infection is rare because there has been a vaccine since the 1940s. Most people have been immunized against it.

## Who is most at risk?

About 1 to 8 out of 10 people who get tetanus and are not immunized can die. Babies and older adults are most at risk.

Older adults, people who were born outside of Canada, and people who do not have a record of being completely immunized for tetanus are more likely to have no protection for tetanus.

## How does it spread?

Tetanus bacteria are common in soil, dust, manure (animal stool used as fertilizer), and human stool. They can get into the body through a cut on the skin or an animal bite. Tetanus does not spread from person to person.

## Who should get TIG?

Tetanus can happen when tetanus bacteria get into a wound, such as a cut, puncture, burn, or frostbite. You may get TIG when you have not had a primary series (at least 3 doses) of a tetanus vaccine and:

- You get a wound that is likely to have tetanus bacteria. For example, there is soil or feces in the wound.
- You get a wound that has dead tissue.

If you have a weak immune system, you may need TIG after a wound even if your tetanus vaccines are up to date.

If you have had a primary series of a tetanus vaccine, you usually do not need TIG. But you may need a booster dose (extra dose) of a tetanus vaccine after a wound.

If you have tetanus disease, you may get TIG as a treatment.

## How many doses do I need?

You need 1 dose of TIG as soon as possible after a wound that is at risk for tetanus. You will also need at least 1 dose of tetanus vaccine. You may need more doses of tetanus vaccine if you have not completed your primary series.

## How well does TIG work?

TIG provides fast protection and helps prevent tetanus disease.

## Is TIG safe?

TIG is one of the safest blood products available. Canadian Blood Services carefully screens donors and tests all blood. Blood is not used if the donor has risk factors or tests positive for an infectious disease. TIG is treated with heat and chemicals to kill germs. The risk of getting an infection from TIG is very small.

## Where can I get TIG?

If you have a wound that is at risk for tetanus, call Health Link at 811 as soon as possible. If you need TIG, you will get it at your local public health office or hospital.

Tell your healthcare provider if you do not have a complete primary series (at least 3 doses) of tetanus vaccine.

## Are there side effects from TIG?

There can be side effects from TIG, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- feeling sore or feeling stiff where you had the needle
- a fever
- a rash
- feeling itchy

It is important to stay at the hospital or public health office for 15 minutes after you have TIG. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

## How can I manage side effects?

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from TIG.

## Who should not get TIG?

Talk to your healthcare provider before getting TIG if:

- You have an allergy to any part of the immune globulin.
- You had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this immune globulin or one like it.
- You have low or no immunoglobulin A in your blood (IgA deficiency).

Check with your doctor or public health nurse before you get TIG.

You can still get TIG if you have a mild illness such as a cold or fever.

## What vaccines protect against tetanus?

You need to be immunized with a tetanus vaccine for long-term protection:

- **DTaP-IPV-Hib-HB** protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), and hepatitis B. As part of the routine immunization schedule, babies get this vaccine starting at age 2 months.

- **DTaP-IPV-Hib** protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib). As part of the routine immunization schedule, this vaccine is given to:
  - children born before March 1, 2018, who are under age 7 years
  - children at age 18 months as a booster dose.
- **dTap-IPV** protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), and polio. As part of the routine immunization schedule, children get this vaccine as a booster dose if they are age 4 years and have already had their first 4 doses of a diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, and polio vaccine.
- **dTap** protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. You can get it as a booster dose in Grade 9 and then every 10 years when you are an adult. You should also get this vaccine every time you are pregnant. You may get this vaccine if you are not up to date with your tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis immunizations.

## Can TIG affect any vaccines I have had?

TIG can interfere with live vaccines. You need to wait at least 3 months after getting TIG before you can get a live vaccine. If you had a live vaccine less than 14 days before having TIG, ask a public health nurse if you need the live vaccine again.

## I have a fear of needles. How can I prepare for my immunization?

Many adults and children are afraid of needles. You can do many things before, during, and after immunization to be more comfortable.



Scan the QR code, visit [ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort](https://ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort), or call Health Link at 811 for information.

## For more information about immunization



Call Health Link at 811



Scan the QR code or go to [ahs.ca/immunize](https://ahs.ca/immunize)