Tetanus/Diphtheria (Td) Vaccine

Immunization protects you from disease. Get protected, get immunized.

- **Vaccines make your immune system stronger by building antibodies, which help prevent diseases.**
- **Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.**

Who should have the Td vaccine?

This vaccine is given to adults.

Talk to your healthcare provider if you were not immunized as a baby. You may need more than just a Td booster.

How many doses of Td vaccine are needed?

The first time people get immunized for tetanus and diphtheria, 3 doses are usually given over a period of time. This is called the primary series. People usually get this series as babies.

After the primary series, booster doses are needed to keep you protected. Td vaccine is used for adult boosters every 10 years.

A similar vaccine called diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis (dTap) vaccine also protects against pertussis (whooping cough). It should be given instead of Td for one of the adult booster doses.

How well does the vaccine work?

After the primary series of tetanus and diphtheria vaccine, followed by a booster dose, protection is almost 100% for diphtheria and tetanus.

It is important to get booster doses because protection may decrease over time.

Where can I get the vaccine?

The vaccine is given at a public health office in your area.

Sometimes Td vaccine is given at your doctor's office, walk-in clinic, urgent care centre or the emergency department to people at risk for tetanus after an injury or wound.

Are there side effects from Td vaccine?

Reactions to the vaccine are usually mild and go away in a few days. They may include:

- redness, swelling, and discomfort where the needle was given
- sore or swollen joints
- chills or fever

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after immunization because people can have a rare but serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

Unusual reactions can happen. Call Health Link at 811 to report any unusual reactions.

How can I manage side effects?

- To help with discomfort and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area.
- If you need fever or pain medicine, check with your pharmacist or doctor. Do not give aspirin to anyone under 19 years old because it can cause serious health problems.
- Some people with health problems (e.g., 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 was due to immunization.

Is there anyone who cannot have Td vaccine?

You may not be able to have the vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to parts of the vaccine—always tell your healthcare provider about allergies.
- had a serious or unusual reaction after this vaccine (or a similar one)—always tell your healthcare provider if you have had reactions.

You can be immunized if you have a mild illness (e.g., cold), even if you have a fever.

For More Information

Call Health Link at **811**

Go to **immunizealberta.ca**

Go to **myhealth.alberta.ca**

Disease Quick Facts

Diphtheria

- nose and throat infection caused by bacteria
- can cause trouble breathing or swallowing, heart failure, and paralysis
- 1 out of 10 people who get diphtheria will die
- spread by coughing, sneezing, or close contact with an infected person

Tetanus

- bacterial infection that causes spasms of the jaw (lock jaw) and other muscles
- can lead to trouble breathing, seizures, and death
- this bacteria is common in dirt, manure, and human stool and enters the body by a wound or animal bite
- tetanus disease is rare since a vaccine became available in the 1940s