

Tetanus, Diphtheria and acellular Pertussis (Tdap) Vaccine

Public Health - Factsheet

Immunization is one of the most important accomplishments in public health that has, over the past 50 years, led to the elimination, containment and control of diseases that were once very common in Canada.¹ Vaccines help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause diseases.

What are tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis?

These diseases can cause serious complications including death.

Tetanus (or lockjaw): Tetanus is caused by bacteria that can cause painful tightening and stiffening of muscles (spasms) usually all over the body including muscles in the head and neck and may prevent chewing or swallowing and cause breathing problems. Tetanus infections can be very serious and often deadly if the breathing muscles are affected. Tetanus does not spread from person to person. Tetanus spores live in dirt, dust and manure and can get into the body through an open cut or burn on the skin. Symptoms may begin to appear seven to 10 days after infection.

Diphtheria: Diphtheria is caused by bacteria that can make a thick covering (membrane) in the back of the nose and throat, which can lead to breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure, and even death. Diphtheria can be spread from person to person by coughing, sneezing, or sharing of food or drinks. Diphtheria sometimes causes skin sores, and contact with these sores can also spread infection. Symptoms may begin to appear two to five days after infection.

Pertussis (whooping cough): Pertussis is a bacterial infection that results in long coughing spells that makes it hard for infants and children to eat, drink, or even breathe. It also can result in pneumonia, brain damage, seizures and death, especially in infants. Pertussis can easily spread by coughing or sneezing or face-to-face-contact. Symptoms may begin to appear seven to 10 days after infection.

What is the Tdap Vaccine?

Tdap vaccine is approved by Health Canada and provides protection against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis diseases. This vaccine is given by needle.

In order to be fully protected against these diseases multiple doses may be required over a period of time.

Why should I get the Tdap vaccine?

Immunization is the best way to protect you and your family against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis that can often be serious and sometimes fatal.

Vaccines help prepare your body to fight potential future exposure to the virus/bacteria by getting your immune system ready.

The vaccine helps to protect you, your family, and other people in your community.

As protection from the vaccine can lessen over time it is important to follow Manitoba's Immunization Schedule.

Possible side-effects of the Tdap vaccine

It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get tetanus, diphtheria, or pertussis. Health Canada approves vaccines based on a review of quality and safety.

Common reactions to the vaccine include soreness, redness and swelling where the vaccine was given. Some people may have fever, drowsiness, dizziness, or an upset stomach. These are mild reactions and usually last one to two days. Acetaminophen (Tylenol® or Temptra®) can be given for fever or soreness.

ASA (Aspirin®) should NEVER be given to children because it can cause a severe liver and brain disease called Reye's Syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is a rare possibility of a severe allergic reaction. This can include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the

¹ Public Health Agency of Canada

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throat, tongue or lips. Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department for immediate treatment should any serious reactions occur after leaving the clinic.

Report any serious or unexpected side-effects to a health care provider.

Who should get the Tdap vaccine?

The Tdap vaccine is provided free of charge when part of Manitoba's Immunization Program.

The Tdap vaccine increases the protection that you or your child(ren) should already have from immunizations provided as part of Manitoba's routine childhood immunizations.

All adolescents should get one "booster" dose of Tdap at 13 to 15 years of age. It is offered in grade eight or nine as part of the school immunization programs, but if missed can be received from other immunization providers.

Adults who are due for a tetanus booster and have never had a pertussis-containing vaccine in adulthood should get the Tdap vaccine.

Pregnant women should get the Tdap vaccine in every pregnancy to protect their new born infant from pertussis. Optimal timing is between 27 and 32 weeks gestation, although it can be given at any time during pregnancy.

For those who are seven years of age and older who did not receive their primary immunizations against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis should talk to their immunization provider to determine which vaccines and the number of doses required to provide the required protection against these diseases.

Who should NOT get the Tdap vaccine?

Talk to your health care provider if:

- You or your child(ren) have had a severe allergic reaction after receiving a previous dose of the Tdap vaccine or to any of the contents of the vaccine.
- There is a history of Guillian-Barré syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of the administration of a previous tetanus-containing vaccine.

Tdap vaccine is not to be used for the primary immunization series for children under the age of seven years. Discuss with your immunization provider what vaccine should be provided to complete the primary series.

Anyone with a high fever should not be immunized. The vaccine can still be given if you have a mild illness, like a cold.

Your record of protection

Make sure your immunization provider updates your immunization record card or that of your child(ren), after receiving an immunization. Keep the card in a safe place!

Your immunizations or those of your child(ren) will be recorded in Manitoba's immunization registry. This registry:

- allows the health care provider to find out which immunizations you or your child(ren) have had or need to have
- may be used to produce immunization records, or notify you or your health care provider if a particular immunization has been missed
- allows Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living and public health officials to monitor how well vaccines work in preventing disease

If you need information on the immunizations that you or your child(ren) have received, contact your health care provider.

The Personal Health Information Act protects your information and/or that of your child(ren). You can have your personal health information and/or that of your child(ren) hidden from view from health care providers. For additional information, please contact your local public health office to speak with a public health nurse.

For a listing of public health offices please visit: www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html.

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For more information on the Tdap vaccine:

- Talk to your health care provider.
- Call Health Links – Info Santé in Winnipeg at 204-788-8200; toll free elsewhere in Manitoba 1-888-315-9257.
- Visit:

Manitoba's Immunization Program website

www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/index.html

Government of Canada website

<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-living-vie-saine/immunization-immunisation/index-eng.php>

Canadian Pediatric Society website

www.cps.ca/