



## Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis Vaccine (Tdap)

### What is tetanus (lock jaw)?

Tetanus is a serious disease that may happen if dirt with the tetanus bacteria gets into a cut in the skin. Tetanus bacteria are found everywhere, usually in soil, dust, and manure. It does not spread from person to person. Tetanus causes cramping of the muscles in the neck, arms, legs, and stomach. It may also cause painful convulsions which may be severe enough to break bones. Even with early treatment, tetanus kills two out of every 10 people who get it.

### What is diphtheria?

Diphtheria is a serious disease of the nose, throat, and skin. It causes sore throat, fever, and chills. It may also cause more serious complications such as breathing problems, heart failure and nerve damage. Diphtheria kills about one out of every 10 people who get the disease. It is most often passed to others through coughing and sneezing.

### What is pertussis (whooping cough)?

Pertussis is a common disease that causes prolonged cough illness. Pertussis is particularly serious in infants. This cough can cause a person to vomit or stop breathing for a short period of time. The cough can last for weeks and make it hard to eat, drink or even breathe. Pertussis can cause serious complications such as pneumonia. Pertussis can also cause brain damage and seizures, especially in babies. Pertussis spreads very easily from an infected person to others through coughing or sneezing. Adults are recognized as the main source for pertussis infection in infants and young children. Infected adults and adolescents can pass on the disease to infants not yet fully protected and who are at greater risk of complications from pertussis.

### Who is eligible to receive the publicly funded vaccine?

- Adolescents 14 to 16 years of age require the Tdap vaccine (ten years after their 4-to-6-year dose)
- All adults (≥18 years of age) are eligible for one Tdap dose (generally given 10 years after the adolescent Tdap dose)
- All pregnant individuals are eligible in every pregnancy for protection against pertussis, regardless of previous Tdap immunization history.

### Who should not get the Tdap vaccine?

Individuals should not get the vaccine if they:

- have had an allergic reaction to a previous dose of a vaccine containing diphtheria, tetanus or pertussis.
- have an allergy to any of the vaccine components and/or ingredients.
- have a history of encephalopathy within 7 days of administration of a vaccine with pertussis components.
- have a history of Guillian-Barré syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of getting a tetanus vaccine dose.
- have a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold (vaccination should be postponed).

Please speak with your health care provider if you have a severe condition affecting your immune system, whether from a disease or treatment or had a severe injection site reaction following a dose of tetanus containing vaccine in the last 10 years.

### Is the Tdap vaccine safe?

Yes, the Tdap vaccine is safe. Side effects of the Tdap vaccine are usually mild and commonly include pain and/or redness at injection site. Fatigue, headache, fever, generalized body aches and sore or swollen joints can also occur. These symptoms usually last for only a day or two after getting the vaccine.

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