

TETANUS, or lockjaw, is a dangerous nerve ailment caused by the toxin of a common bacterium often found in soil. This bacterium can also exist in environments as diverse as animal excrement, house dust, and operating rooms. It enters the body through cuts, scratches or wounds.

DIPHTHERIA is highly contagious and is spread by coughing and sneezing. It is a respiratory disease that typically causes a sore throat, fever, swollen glands and weakness. It can also cause paralysis, heart failure, and death.

PERTUSSIS, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious illness spread by contact with droplets coughed out by someone with the disease. It can also be caused by contact with recently contaminated hard surfaces upon which the droplets have landed. Early symptoms include runny nose, nasal congestion, and sneezing. After this stage, the most common symptom is intense bouts of coughing in which the gasping person makes a "whoop" sound when inhaling between coughs.

TD (TETANUS BOOSTER) vaccine can protect against tetanus and diphtheria, and has been used for many years as booster doses for adolescents and adults. A related vaccine is DTaP which is routinely administered as five doses spread between infancy and children 4 - 6 years of age. It protects against the same three diseases.

A dose of Tdap is recommended for adolescents who got DTaP or DTP as children but have not yet gotten a dose of Td. The preferred age is 11-12. Adolescents who have already gotten a booster dose of Td are encouraged to get a dose of Tdap for protection against pertussis. Adolescents who did not get all their scheduled doses of DTaP or DTP as children should complete the series using a combination of Td and Tdap.

All adults aged 19 and older should get a booster dose of Td every 10 years. Tdap should be substituted for Td (Tetanus Booster) for the next dose among people with the following characteristics:

- All adults who have never gotten Tdap.
- All adults who expect to have close contact with an infant younger than 12 months of age.
- Healthcare workers who have direct contact in hospitals or clinics.

Pregnant women should get Tdap during the 27th to 36th week of each pregnancy. New mothers who have never gotten Tdap should get a dose as soon as possible after delivery.

Anyone who gets a severe cut or burn might need a dose of Td or Tdap to prevent tetanus infection. Tdap may be used for people who have never had a dose. But Td should be used if Tdap is not available, or for anyone who has already had a dose of Tdap and children 7 - 9 years of age.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE TDAP AND TD (TETANUS BOOSTER) VACCINES?

Mild-to-moderate problems: soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given, deep aching pain and loss of muscle strength in the upper arm, difficulty breathing, wheezing, hives, pale skin, fast heartbeat, and dizziness.

REFERENCES

Atkinson W, Hamborsky J, McIntyre L, Wolfe S, eds. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases*. 10th ed. Washington, DC: Public Health Foundation, 2007.

Vaccine Information Statement: *Td or Tdap (Tetanus-Diphtheria or Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis) Vaccine*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). January 24, 2012. www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-td-tdap.pdf. Accessed February 2013.