

Fact Sheet

Tetanus-Diphtheria-Acellular Pertussis (Tdap) Vaccine

What is diphtheria?

Diphtheria is a bacteria that can cause a serious infection of the nose and throat, and can lead to severe breathing problems.

What is tetanus?

Tetanus (lockjaw) is a bacteria that can enter through scrapes and cuts, and causes painful tightening of muscles of the body, breathing problems, and occasionally death.

What is pertussis (whooping cough)?

Pertussis is a bacteria that can cause serious infection of airways, causing pneumonia, brain damage, or even death. Babies and young children are most at risk for complications.

Who should receive the vaccine?

In Nunavut this booster vaccine is recommended for all children and adults. It is given routinely in high school (between 14 to 16 years of age) and once in adulthood.

What are the benefits of the vaccine?

- It prevents Nunavummiut from getting sick with diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough.
- Because of immunizations, these diseases are now rare in Canada.

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. Most people have no side effects or, if they do, they are mild and last no longer than a couple days.

Common side effects include:

- Soreness, redness and swelling where the vaccine was given
- Mild fever or tiredness
- Headache or irritability

With all vaccines, there is a very rare chance of a severe allergic reaction called *anaphylaxis*. Anaphylaxis appears as hives, rash, swelling of the mouth, difficulty breathing. This type of reaction typically occurs within 15 minutes of receiving a vaccine. **It is recommended you stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine.** Anaphylaxis can be treated and your healthcare provider is trained to treat it.

Who should talk with their healthcare provider before getting the vaccine?

Talk to your health care provider if you or your child has any of the following:

- A severe reaction to a previous dose of this or any vaccine.
- An allergy to any ingredient of the vaccine.
- Currently pregnant.

What is the risk of not getting the vaccine?

If your child does not get all recommended vaccines, he or she is at risk of becoming sick. These diseases can lead to serious complications and even death.

Vaccine After Care

- To control fever and relieve pain or soreness, you can give your child Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Tempra) or Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). For children, give the amount recommended by your health care provider or on the bottle. A cold compress may also be used to relieve pain and swelling at the injection site.
- Aspirin (ASA) should **NOT** be given to anyone under 20 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome, which can cause permanent brain damage and death.
- Any serious side effects such as swelling of the mouth/lips, hives or seizures should be checked out by a healthcare provider immediately.
- If you have any questions, or are concerned about a reaction from any vaccine, talk with your healthcare provider.

