

TETANUS, DIPHTHERIA, PERTUSSIS VACCINE INFORMATION

(Adacel® or Boostrix® Vaccine)

WHAT IS TETANUS DISEASE AND HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

- Tetanus is also known as lockjaw
- Tetanus is caused by toxin produced by the bacteria *Clostridium tetani* which enter the body through a cut or wound in the skin
- Tetanus is found in the soil and intestines of animals and humans
- Tetanus causes painful, prolonged muscle spasms of the jaw, neck, arms, leg, and stomach. Neurological damage and death can occur
- Tetanus is not contagious from person to person
- Tetanus occurs all over the world

WHAT IS DIPHTHERIA AND HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

- Diphtheria is transmitted by person-to-person spread from the respiratory tract or, rarely, by contact with articles soiled with excretions of infected people
- Symptoms include a mild fever, sore throat, difficulty swallowing, extreme tiredness, and loss of appetite. It can progress to difficulty breathing, and choking in young children
- Diphtheria toxin causes a greyish white membrane to develop in the throat that makes it difficult to breathe and can be fatal
- Diphtheria death rate is 5% to 10%; the highest rates occur among very young or elderly people that have not received the vaccine and in countries that rarely see this disease, because diagnosis is often late
- Other serious complications of the heart and nervous system can result from diphtheria
- It is now very rare in Canada because of immunization but it is still common in developing countries where vaccines are not given routinely

WHAT IS PERTUSSIS AND HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

- Pertussis (whooping cough) is a highly contagious bacterial illness spread by respiratory droplets
- It causes violent coughing that can lead to choking or vomiting. The coughing can be so intense that a "whooping" sound is made when trying to catch the next breath
- The cough can last for weeks or months and without treatment, can cause brain damage or even death

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- Pertussis can cause babies to stop breathing or have seizures
- It is most dangerous for children under one year old especially if they are not vaccinated or under vaccinated
- Pertussis outbreaks occur in Ontario every two to five years

HOW CAN TETANUS, DIPHTHERIA, AND PERTUSSIS DISEASES BE PREVENTED?

- Vaccination is the best protection against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. This vaccine is safe and effective.
- It is licensed for people who are four years and older (younger children need a different dosage of vaccine that can be received at a doctor's office)
- It is often given to previously vaccinated adolescents as a booster
- It is also recommended for adults who did not receive a pertussis-containing vaccine in adulthood
- Pregnant women should receive this vaccine between 27 and 32 weeks in every pregnancy
- Proof of vaccination against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, or a valid exemption, is required by law for all children attending school in Ontario

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF THIS VACCINE?

- Redness, swelling or pain at the injection site are the most common
- Fever, chills, headache, and fatigue

WHO SHOULD NOT HAVE THIS VACCINE?

- People who have ever had ever had a severe allergic (anaphylactic) reaction to a previous dose of this vaccine
- People with a severe (anaphylactic) allergy to any vaccine component

WHO SHOULD CONSULT THEIR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER BEFORE VACCINATION?

- People with complicated medical issues or previous severe reactions to vaccines should consult their health care provider before vaccination

REFERENCES

- [Pertussis \(whooping cough\) - Canada.ca](#)
- [Pertussis \(whooping cough\) vaccines: Canadian Immunization Guide - Canada.ca](#)