



Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis

What is Tdap and why is it important?

Tdap is a combination vaccine that contains Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis. **Tetanus** is disease that can enter the body through wounds or cuts in the skin. It can cause stiffening of the muscles, and lead to serious health problems including unable to open the mouth, difficulty swallowing and breathing. In severe cases, it can lead to death. **Diphtheria** can be spread in the air from person to person. It is a bacterial infection that usually affects the mucous membranes of the nose and throat. Diphtheria can cause difficulty breathing, heart failure, paralysis, and in severe cases death. **Pertussis** is also known as Whooping Cough. Whooping cough is a highly contagious disease that affects the lungs. You may not be able to recognize the first signs of whooping cough. In most cases, whooping cough in adults can start out like the common cold. Symptoms include: runny nose, congestion, sneezing, mild cough, fever. Severe coughing can begin after 1-2 weeks due to thick mucus in the airways. Coughing fits can be uncontrollable, causing shortness of breath, vomiting, broken ribs, pneumonia, and can last another 2-4 weeks. These symptoms and complications can cause adults to be hospitalized and to miss work. People with whooping cough can have sporadic coughing fits for up to 3 months or more. This disease has been termed the 100-day cough.

Prior to pertussis vaccines becoming widely available in the 1940s, about 200,000 U.S. children got sick with it each year and about 8,000 die from disease complications. Today, due to the routine administration of the pertussis vaccine, only about 20 people die each year due to the disease. Since the late 1980's pertussis has been on the rise and there have been outbreaks reported. In many cases, infants and young children contract the disease from caretakers or older siblings who are not updated with the Tdap vaccine.

Additional Information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/dtap-tdap-td/hcp/about-vaccine.html>

How is whooping cough spread and when is it contagious?

It spreads from person to person through the air by coughing and sneezing. It is very contagious. Persons are most contagious when they are experiencing cold-like symptoms and may be unaware they have the disease. They will continue to be contagious the first 2 weeks after the coughing starts. People with whooping cough are generally contagious for about 21 days. A person with pertussis can infect up to 12 to 15 other people.

Preventing Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Whooping Cough): Get Vaccinated

The single best way to prevent tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis is to get a Tdap (Tetanus Diphtheria and Pertussis) vaccine. Adults and adolescents make up more than half of the reported cases of pertussis. Many infants who are infected with whooping cough contract the bacteria from parents and older siblings. The only way to stop the growth of pertussis is for adults to get the Tdap vaccine. It will shield you from getting sick and maybe protect an infant from a much worse fate.

Who Should Get Vaccinated?

ACIP (Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices) recommends that **all adults aged 19 and older should receive a dose of Tdap. Also, adults should receive a booster dose every 10 years**, or earlier in the case of a severe and dirty wound or burn. Booster doses can be either Tdap or Td. Adolescents aged 11 through 18 years who have completed the recommended childhood diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccinations are recommended to receive the Tdap at the 11- to 12-year-old preventative health-care visit. The ACIP also recommends that all pregnant women receive a Tdap during the third trimester of EACH pregnancy (Please ask your OB for your vaccination as Healthy Solutions does not vaccinate pregnant women with Tdap). **Your Tdap vaccination can help protect you and those around you from getting pertussis (whooping cough)!**