

PROTECTION FROM TETANUS and DIPHTHERIA

What is Tetanus (lockjaw)?

Tetanus is caused by bacteria present in soil, dust and manure. If the bacterium infects a cut it can produce a poison that could cause severe muscle spasms all over the body and can even lead to death. Tightening of the jaw muscles can occur which prevents the individual from opening the mouth. 60% of people who get tetanus will die from it.

What is Diphtheria?

Diphtheria is caused by bacteria that can infect the nose and throat and prevent normal breathing. It can also cause skin or ear infections, can lead to heart failure, nerve damage, or even death. 10% of people who get diphtheria will die from it.

Vaccination for Tetanus and diphtheria (Td)

Vaccines (or needles) are the best way to protect against some very serious infections. Td is a two- in-one vaccine that has been in use for many years. This vaccine is for people age 7 or older. It can be used as a catch up vaccine for someone who did not get all of their doses of this vaccine when they were younger. It is used as a booster dose for adults every 10 years and for protection against possible tetanus infection in a wound. This vaccine is given in the muscle of the upper arm.

Are there any side effects?

Side effects of the Td vaccine are mild and last only a few days. Mild pain, swelling and redness at the needle site are common. A mild fever, loss of appetite or tiredness may occur for a day or two after the needle. Although rare, serious side effects or allergic reactions (e.g., hives, difficulty breathing) may occur with any vaccination. Contact your family doctor or go to the nearest emergency room immediately if you experience any serious reactions.

Who should not get this vaccine?

- Children younger than 7 years of age
- Individuals who have had a tetanus shot in the last 5 years
- Individuals who are sick with an infection or high fever
- Individuals who are allergic to any part of the vaccine or history of a severe reaction to this vaccine in the past

**For additional information and services
contact your Regional Health Authority
listed in the white pages of your
telephone book.**