



# TETANUS AND DIPHTHERIA / Td VACCINE



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### 1. About the diseases ?

- ***Tetanus (lockjaw) and Diphtheria are serious diseases.***
- Tetanus is caused by a germ that enters the body through a cut or wound.
- Diphtheria spreads when germs pass from an infected person to the nose or throat of others.
  
- ***Tetanus causes:***
  - serious, painful spasms of all muscles.
  - breathing problems.
- ***Tetanus can lead to:***
  - “locking” of the jaw so the patient cannot open his or her mouth or swallow.
  - death.
  
- ***Diphtheria causes:***
  - a thick coating in the nose, throat, or airway.
- ***Diphtheria can lead to:***
  - breathing problems.
  - heart failure.
  - paralysis.
  - death.

### 2. About the vaccines:

***Vaccination is the best way to protect against Tetanus and Diphtheria.***

### 3. Who should get Td vaccine and when ?

- Td is made for people 7 years of age and older.
- People who have not gotten at least 3 doses of any Tetanus and Diphtheria vaccine (DTP, DTaP or DT) during their lifetime should do so using Td. After a person gets the third dose, a Td dose is needed every 10 years through out life.

**Other vaccines may be given at the same time as Td.**

### 4. Some people should not get Td vaccine or should wait:

- If you ever had a ***serious allergic reaction*** or other problem with Td, or any other Tetanus and Diphtheria vaccine (DTP, DTaP or DT).
- If you now have a moderate or severe illness.
- If you are pregnant.

### 5. What are the risks from Td vaccine ?

A vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions.  
***The risk of Td vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.***

***Getting Td vaccine is much safer than getting the diseases.  
Most people who get Td vaccine do not have any problems with it.***

***Mild problems:***

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given.  
These problems can be worse in adults who get Td vaccine very often.

If these problems occur, they usually start within hours to a day or two after vaccination. They may last 1-2 days.

***Severe problems (very rare):***

- Serious allergic reactions, within a few minutes to a few hours of the shot, ***are very rare.***
- Deep, aching pain and muscle wasting in upper arm(s). This starts 2 days to 4 weeks after the shot, and may last many months.

## **6. What if there is a moderate or severe reaction ?**

***What should I look for ?***

- Any unusual condition, such as a serious allergic reaction, high fever or unusual behavior. Serious allergic reactions are extremely rare with any vaccine. If one were to occur, it would be within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot. Signs can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

***What should I do ?***

- Call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.

## **7. How can I learn more ?**

- Ask your doctor or nurse. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Contact the American Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):  
Visit CDC websites at: [www.cdc.gov/nip](http://www.cdc.gov/nip)