

# Important Information about Tetanus and Diphtheria and Td Vaccine

## PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY

### What is TETANUS?

- It is also called lockjaw.
- It is a disease that occurs when cuts or wounds are infected with tetanus bacteria.
- The bacteria, which are often found in dirt, makes a poison which causes the muscles of the body to go into spasm.
- It can be a life-threatening disease.
- It is preventable through immunization.

### What is DIPHTHERIA?

- It is a very serious disease.
- It may result in an infection of the nose and throat which can affect the breathing.
- It may cause an infection of the skin.
- It may cause heart failure or paralysis.
- About one person out of every ten who get diphtheria dies.
- It is preventable through immunization.

### What is Tetanus-Diphtheria (Td) Vaccine?

- Immunization with Td is the best way to prevent these diseases.
- Td is two vaccines combined into one.
- The vaccine is given by injection.

### Who should receive the Td vaccine?

- Reinforcing doses (boosters) are recommended every 10 years for adults 18 years of age and older.

### CAUTION

**SOME PEOPLE SHOULD CHECK WITH A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER BEFORE THEY RECEIVE THIS VACCINE.**

- People taking high doses of oral steroids or undergoing treatment for cancer.
- People who have problems with their immune system which lowers the body's resistance to infection.

### Who Should NOT Receive this Vaccine?

- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of Td vaccine.
- People who have had a serious reaction to any contents of the Td vaccine before.

### What to Expect Following Immunization with Td Vaccine

*People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any vaccine there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.*

Possible side effects from the vaccine:

- The most common side effect from this vaccine is fever within 12 hours of vaccination.
- Rarely some people may develop:
  - Soreness and/or swelling in the area where the immunization was given.
  - A small painless nodule (bump) that usually disappears within two months.

*As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. These medications should not be taken if you have certain medical conditions. Talk to your health care provider about your medical history before using either of these medications.*

### Fever Management

A fever is not necessarily bad, but may make you uncomfortable. If you think you have a fever:

- Take your temperature.
- If temperature is over 38.5°C (101°F) you may take an antipyretic medicine that will help control the fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- Remember to take extra fluids e.g., juice or water.

### Call Your Health Care Provider If:

- The fever lasts longer than 24 hours.
- Your temperature is 39.5°C (103°F) or greater.
- The fever fails to go down after the acetaminophen or ibuprofen is taken.

If you have any questions, please call your health care provider.

### QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions regarding tetanus, diphtheria, or Td vaccine, please call your local Public Health Services office, or your health care provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the websites of

- the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness at [www.immunize.cpha.ca](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca)
- the Public Health Agency of Canada at [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)