



Northwestern  
Health Unit

www.nwhu.on.ca

## **Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Tdap) Vaccine**

This vaccine protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis.

### **Who should get the Tdap vaccine?**

- Given to teenagers 10 years after their 4-6 year booster
- A one-time dose of Tdap vaccine is given to adults 19 years of age and older

### **Who should not get these vaccine?**

- People with a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold should delay immunization
- People who have an allergy to any component of the vaccine
- Anyone with a serious or unstable neurological health condition

### **Common Side Effects**

Side effects are mild and usually last for only a few days after getting the needle. The most common side effects are pain, swelling and redness. Less common side effects could include headache, fever, rash and muscle pain.

## **Tetanus**

Tetanus or lockjaw is a serious disease that can happen if dirt with the tetanus germ gets into a cut in the skin. Tetanus germs are found everywhere, usually in soil, dust, and manure. It does not spread from person to person. Tetanus can cause severe muscle spasms, which may begin near the injury, then spread to many muscles of the body. Even with early treatment, tetanus kills two out of every 10 people who get it.

## **Diphtheria**

Diphtheria is a serious disease of the nose, throat and skin. It causes sore throat, fever and chills. It can be complicated by breathing problems, heart failure and nerve damage. Diphtheria kills about one out of every 10 people who get the disease. It is most often passed to others through coughing and sneezing.

## **Pertussis**

Pertussis is called “whooping cough” because of the typical whoop sound made at the end of a severe coughing spell. However, in infants younger than 6 months, the whoop is often absent. The pertussis germ is carried in the nose and throat and is very contagious. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, the germ can be spread to others in close contact and can last for many weeks. Teenagers and adults are often responsible for infecting infants. The illness can be much more severe in infants under one year of age. If you are not protected against pertussis through vaccination, you can become ill.

For more information please call the  
Northwestern Health Unit office in your area.  
[www.nwhu.on.ca](http://www.nwhu.on.ca)