

Combined Tetanus, Diphtheria, Acellular Pertussis Tdap Immunization

Tdap immunization is part of the routine Yukon Immunization Program. This immunization protects against tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and their complications.

The **Tdap immunization** is usually given to school aged children and adults as a booster following earlier immunization against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough).

During each pregnancy, women are also recommended to receive this immunization once they are 26 or more weeks pregnant. This protects them and their newborns.

Without this booster dose, your body will not be able to continue to protect you and your loved ones from these diseases.

This immunization protects against three diseases:

- Tetanus
- Diphtheria
- Pertussis (whooping cough)

Tetanus or “lockjaw” is caused by bacteria found in soil, dust and manure. When the bacteria enter the skin through a cut or scrape, they produce a poison that can cause painful tightening of muscles all over the body and even death (10% of cases). It is very serious if the breathing muscles are affected.

Diphtheria can result in very serious breathing problems. It can also cause heart failure and paralysis.

Pertussis, or “whooping cough,” is caused by a bacteria that spreads easily from person to person by coughing and sneezing. Pertussis can cause severe coughing that often ends with a whooping sound before the next breath. This cough can last several months and occurs more often at night. Pertussis can also cause pneumonia, heart and nerve damage, broken ribs, convulsions, brain damage or even death. When you get immunized for pertussis, you help protect others from this disease.

Why is Tdap immunization recommended?

Immunization is the best prevention against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Tdap is required as a booster to ensure that earlier immunizations continue to protect you against these diseases. You must complete the whole series to be protected from tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. It is very important that you receive your immunizations on time, to provide the best protection possible.

The Tdap immunization is very effective and safe. The benefits of the immunization outweigh any potential side effects.

Possible side effects of the immunization:

- Soreness, redness or swelling at injection site.
- Rarely, the individual may display a fever, irritability and drowsiness or loss of appetite.
- These reactions are mild, and generally last one or two days.

What to do:

- Comfort measures may be all that is needed.
- Apply a cold, damp compress to the immunization site.
- Administer acetaminophen-type medication if oral temperature is 38.5° C or higher.

Allergic reactions are very rare and can be treated by the person who gave the immunization. You will be asked to wait for 15 minutes after the immunization to watch for an allergic reaction and to treat one should it happen.

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