
Immunization - Tetanus, Diphtheria and inactivated Poliovirus (Td-IPV) Vaccine

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a health care professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

Vaccines (injections or shots) are the best way to protect against some very serious infections. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization and the Canadian Paediatric Society strongly recommend routine immunization.

Td-IPV is a three-in-one vaccine. It protects people against tetanus, diphtheria and polio. It can be used in unimmunized people seven years or older. Vaccination against tetanus, diphtheria and polio is required by law for all children attending school in Ontario (unless exempted).

What is 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 causes cramping of the muscles in the neck, arms, leg and stomach, and painful convulsions which can be severe enough to break bones. Even with early treatment, tetanus kills two out of every 10 people who get it.

What is 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.

What is polio?

Polio is a dangerous disease that people can get from drinking water or eating food with the polio germ in it. It is also spread from person to person. This disease can cause nerve damage and paralyze a person for life. It can paralyze muscles used for breathing, talking, eating and walking. It can also cause death.

How well does Td-IPV vaccine protect against tetanus, diphtheria and polio?

When Td-IPV vaccine is given in the recommended number of shots, it protects virtually 100 per cent of people against tetanus, over 95 per cent of people against diphtheria, and 99 per cent of people against polio. Vaccination also makes these diseases milder for those who may catch them.

When should Td-IPV vaccine be given?

Td-IPV vaccine may be given to persons immunized in childhood against polio who are travelling to areas where polio is common if their last dose of polio vaccine was given 10 years or more ago and they need tetanus and diphtheria protection. They should receive a single dose of Td-IPV.

Tdap (tetanus-diphtheria- acellular pertussis) vaccine has replaced the Td-IPV vaccine for the adolescent booster. Booster doses against tetanus and diphtheria (Td) are required for adults every 10 years for continued protection.

Is the Td-IPV vaccine safe?

Yes. Side effects of the Td-IPV vaccine are mild and last for only a few days after getting the shot. Mild pain, swelling and redness are common at the spot where the needle was given. A few people may get a mild fever, lose their appetite or feel tired for a day or two after the shot. There is no risk of a pregnant woman or anyone else catching any disease from someone who has been recently vaccinated. You should always discuss the benefits and risks of any vaccine with your doctor/nurse practitioner.

When should I call my doctor/nurse practitioner?

Call your doctor/nurse practitioner or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if any of the following symptoms develop within three days of getting the shot:

- hives;
- swelling of the face or mouth;
- trouble breathing;
- very pale colour and serious drowsiness;
- high fever (over 40 C or 104 F);
- convulsions or seizures;
- other serious problems.

Who should not get the Td-IPV vaccine?

The doctor/nurse practitioner may decide not to give the Td-IPV vaccine if the person has:

- high fever or serious infection worse than a cold;
- severe allergy to antibiotics called neomycin or polymyxin B;
- serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to this vaccine;
- severe allergic reaction to any component of the vaccine;

Pregnant women should wait until the second trimester to get a routine shot.

Who should I talk to if I have any more questions about the Td-IPV vaccine?

Talk to your doctor/nurse practitioner or call your local public health unit for more information.

Your record of protection

After any immunization, make sure your personal immunization record (i.e., the "yellow card") is updated. If your child is attending child care or school, inform your local public health unit each time your child receives an immunization. An immunization record is required for school and child care attendance and for certain types of travel and work, so keep it in a safe place.