

## Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Polio (Td Polio) Vaccine

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

Td Polio is a three-in-one needle. It protects people against tetanus, diphtheria, and polio. It is used in people 7 years or older. In the past, this vaccine was administered to people 7 years of age and older and as a booster around age 15. Now, due to a change in the immunization schedule and improved combination vaccine, this is no longer given. As of January, 2005, adolescents between the ages of 14 and 16 years of age receive a booster of tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Adacel). Adults travelling outside of Canada to known infected areas for polio receive a one-time injection of Td polio. After this needle, booster doses against tetanus and diphtheria are required every ten years for continued protection.

### 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, legs, and stomach, and painful convulsions which can be severe enough to break bones. Even with early treatment, tetanus kills two out of every ten 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 one out of every ten people who get the disease. It is 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. 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 Polio vaccine protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and polio?

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

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### **Is the Td Polio vaccine safe?**

Yes. Side effects of the Td Polio vaccine are mild and last for only a few days after getting the needle. 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 needle. 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.

### **When should I call my doctor?**

Call your doctor if any of the following symptoms develop within three days of getting the needle:

- 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, or
- other serious problems.

### **Who should NOT get the Td Polio vaccine?**

The doctor may decide not to give the Td Polio vaccine if the person has:

- a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold,
- a severe allergy to an antibiotic called neomycin, polymyxin B or streptomycin,
- a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to the vaccine, or
- a severe allergic reaction to any component of the vaccine.

### **Who should I talk to if I have any more questions about the Td Polio vaccine?**

Talk to your doctor or call KFL&A Public Health for more information.

### **Your record of protection**

After you receive any immunization, make sure the doctor updates your personal immunization record such as the "Yellow Card". For school-age children, you will need to provide their immunization information to your local health unit at school entry and as they get additional immunizations. Keep your record in a safe place!

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