

# Important Information about **Tetanus and Diphtheria** and Td Vaccine

## PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY

### What is Tetanus?

- Tetanus 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?

- Diphtheria is a very serious illness caused by bacteria.
- It can cause an infection of the nose and throat which can affect breathing.
- It can cause an infection of the skin.
- It can cause heart failure or paralysis.
- Even with treatment, about 1 in 10 patients with respiratory diphtheria die. Without treatment, up to half of patients can die from the disease.
- It is preventable through immunization.

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

- Td vaccine is a single vaccine which protects against Tetanus and Diphtheria.
- Immunization with Td vaccine is the best way to prevent Tetanus and Diphtheria.
- 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

#### Who should NOT receive Td vaccine?

- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose or any component of Td vaccine.
- People who are sick or have a fever (temperature of 38.5°C/101.3°F or greater).

***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.***

#### What are the possible side effects from the Td vaccine?

- The most common side effects of Td vaccine are soreness, redness, and swelling at the injection site, and fever.
- Rarely, some people may develop a small, painless nodule (bump) that usually disappears after several weeks.

***Over-the-counter pain relievers such as ibuprofen (e.g., Advil) and acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) can be used to manage symptoms following vaccination, including fever. Some people should not take these medications. Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist if you have questions, or are unsure if you should take these.***

### Questions?

If you have any questions about Tetanus, Diphtheria, or Td vaccine, please call your local Public Health office (see list of offices here: [www.nshealth.ca/public-health-offices](http://www.nshealth.ca/public-health-offices)), or your health care provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the websites of

- Nova Scotia Health, Public Health at <https://www.nshealth.ca/public-health/immunizations>
- Immunize Canada at [immunize.ca/en/default.aspx](http://immunize.ca/en/default.aspx)
- the Public Health Agency of Canada at [phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://phac-aspc.gc.ca)
- 811 at <https://811.novascotia.ca/>