

# Combined Tetanus, Diphtheria and acellular Pertussis (Tdap) Vaccine

Students from 14 to 16 years old are offered the combined Tetanus, Diphtheria and acellular Pertussis (whooping cough), vaccine to protect them against all of these bacterial infections.

| Disease   | What it Causes   | Possible Complications  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Tetanus (Lockjaw)</b><br>Bacteria is found in soil, dust and manure.                             | Severe muscle spasms in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the jaw</li> <li>• vocal chords</li> <li>• entire body</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death (10% of cases)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Diphtheria</b><br>Infects nose and throat; spreads through direct contact.                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heart and nerve damage</li> <li>• Respiratory problems</li> <li>• High fever</li> <li>• Severe sore throat</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paralysis</li> <li>• Death (5 to 10% of cases)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Pertussis (Whooping Cough)</b><br>Spreads easily from person to person by coughing and sneezing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violent coughing spells</li> <li>• Difficulty eating, breathing and sleeping (for up to many weeks)</li> <li>• Babies under one year have to be hospitalized</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pneumonia</li> <li>• Respiratory failure</li> <li>• Heart and nerve damage</li> <li>• Broken ribs, hernias, collapsed lung</li> <li>• Brain damage</li> <li>• Death (0.4% among babies)</li> </ul> |



## Why consider the Tdap vaccine?

Vaccination is the best protection against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. The Tdap vaccine is very effective and very safe. In most cases, it causes no side effects and the potential complications of the diseases outweigh any possible side effects of the vaccine.

| Possible Side Effects   | What to do  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swelling and redness with or without tenderness around the injection site.</li> <li>• A small bump may develop at the injection site that will disappear over the next few weeks.</li> <li>• Fever (1% to 18% of cases), headaches and muscle pain.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply a cold, damp cloth to the injection site.</li> <li>• Take fever medication such as acetaminophen if your temperature is 38.5°C or over.</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>Severe allergic reactions are rare, begin immediately and can be treated by the person who gave the vaccine. You should remain on site for at least 15 minutes after vaccination so that an allergic reaction, if there is one, can be treated. On rare occasions, serious arm pain and weakness, which could last for several weeks, have been reported (0.5 to 1 case per 100,000 doses).</i></p> |   |

**Consult your health care provider if side effects persist over 48 hours.  
 For more information on vaccinations, visit: <http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/>**

