

# Important Information about **Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis** diseases and Tetanus, Diphtheria and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap) 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, make a poison that 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 disease.
- It can cause an infection of the nose and throat that can affect breathing.
- It can cause an infection of the skin.
- It can cause heart failure or paralysis.
- About 1 person out of every 10 who get diphtheria dies.
- It is preventable through immunization.

### What is PERTUSSIS?

- Pertussis is also called whooping cough. It is caused by bacteria.
- It can cause severe coughing spells that can affect breathing and that last for weeks or months. The disease usually lasts 6 to 12 weeks.
- It can cause pneumonia.
- It can cause convulsions and even death in some cases.
- It is preventable through immunization.

### What Is the Vaccine for Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis?

- Tdap is the name of a vaccine used to prevent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.
- Tdap is three vaccines in one.
- Immunization with Tdap is the best way to prevent diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough in teens.
- The vaccine is given by injection.

### Who Should Receive Tdap Vaccine for Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis?

The Nova Scotia schedule recommends that this vaccine be given to

- grade 7 students (school immunization program), **OR**
- teens aged 14–16 years (school immunization program), **OR**
- those age 17 or older who have not previously received a dose of acellular pertussis vaccine

### CAUTION

***SOME PEOPLE SHOULD CHECK WITH A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER BEFORE THEY RECEIVE THIS VACCINE.***

- People who are sick or have a fever (temperature of 39.5°C/103°F or greater)
- People who are taking high doses of oral steroids
- People who are undergoing treatment for cancer
- People who have problems with their immune system, which lowers the body's resistance to infection

### Who Should NOT Receive Tdap Vaccine?

- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of Tdap vaccine

*Please read other side.*

# What to Expect Following Immunization with **Tetanus, Diphtheria and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap) Vaccine**

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Your child has received Tdap vaccine. This vaccine is important in protecting your child from tetanus (lockjaw), diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough).

*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 Vaccine?

- The most common side effects of Tdap vaccine are pain, redness, and swelling at the site of the injection.
- Other, less common side effects are: mild headache, fever, diarrhea, nausea, chills, body ache, decreased energy, and sore or swollen joints.

*As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. These medications should not be taken if you have certain medical conditions. Talk to your health care provider about your medical history before using either of these medications.*

### Call Your Health Care Provider If

- The fever lasts longer than 24 hours.
- Your child's temperature is 39.5°C (103°F) or greater.
- The fever does not come down after the acetaminophen or ibuprofen is taken.

### Questions?

If you have any questions about tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough, or the Tdap vaccine, please call your local Public Health Services office or your health care provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the websites of

- the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness at [www.immunize.cpha.ca](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca)
- the Public Health Agency of Canada at [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)