Tdap Vaccine for New Mothers

Special Deliveries Childbirth Center
at Hartford Hospital

Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap)
What you need to know after the birth of your baby

Why get vaccinated?
The Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis) vaccine can protect adolescents and adults against three serious diseases.

Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis are all caused by bacteria. Diphtheria and Pertussis are spread from person to person. Tetanus enters the body through cuts, scratches, or wounds.

Tetanus (Lockjaw) causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over the body.
  • It can lead to “locking” of the jaw so the victim cannot open his mouth or swallow. Tetanus leads to death in up to two cases out of ten.

Diphtheria causes a thick covering in the back of the throat.
  • It can lead to breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure, and even death.

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) causes severe coughing spells, vomiting, and disturbed sleep.
  • It can lead to weight loss, incontinence, rib fractures and passing out from violent coughing, pneumonia, and hospitalization due to complications.

In 2004 there were more than 25,000 cases of Pertussis in the U.S. More than 8,000 of these cases were among adolescents and more than 7,000 were among adults. Up to two in 100 adolescents and five in 100 adults with Pertussis are hospitalized or have complications.

Tdap and related vaccines

Vaccines for adolescents and adults
  • Tdap was licensed in 2005. It is the first vaccine for adolescents and adults that protects against all three diseases.
  • Td (tetanus and diphtheria) vaccine has been used for many years as booster doses for adolescents and adults. It does not contain Pertussis vaccine.

Why should I get Tdap vaccine after the birth of my baby?
  • Infants are at highest risk of complications and death related to Pertussis when compared to older age groups. Vaccinating adults who have contact with infants less than 12 months helps to prevent Pertussis in infants.
  • Adults who expect to have close contact with an infant younger than 12 months of age should get a dose of Tdap.
  • New mothers who have never received a dose of Tdap should get a dose as soon as possible after delivery, before hospital discharge. The vaccine is safe for breastfeeding mothers.

continued...
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Are there people who should not get Tdap vaccine or should wait?

Anyone who has had a life-threatening allergic reaction after a dose of DTP, DTaP, DT or Td vaccine should not get Tdap.

Anyone who has a severe allergy to any component of the vaccine should not get Tdap. Tell your health care provider if the person getting the vaccine has any known severe allergies.

Talk with your doctor if the person getting the vaccine has a severe allergy to latex. Some Tdap vaccines should not be given to people with a severe latex allergy.

- Anyone who went into a coma or had a long seizure within seven days after a dose of DTP or DTaP should not get Tdap, unless a cause other than the vaccine was found.
- Talk with your doctor if the person getting the vaccine has epilepsy or another nervous system problem: had severe swelling or severe pain after a previous dose of any vaccine containing tetanus, diphtheria or Pertussis, has had Guillain Barré Syndrome (GBS).

Anyone who has a moderate or severe illness on the day the shot is scheduled should usually wait until they recover before getting the vaccine. Those with a mild illness or low fever can usually be vaccinated.

What are the risks from vaccines?

A vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. However, the risk of a vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

If rare reactions occur with any new product, they may not be identified until many thousands, or even millions, of people have used the product. Like all vaccines, Tdap is being closely monitored for unusual or severe problems.

Clinical trials (testing before the vaccine was licensed) involved about 4,200 adolescents and about 1,800 adults. The following problems were reported. These are similar to problems reported after Td vaccine.

Mild problems

(Noticeable, but did not interfere with activities)

- Pain (about 3 in 4 adolescents and 2 in 3 adults)
- Redness or swelling (about 1 in 5)
- Mild fever of at least 100.4°F (up to about 1 in 25 adolescents and 1 in 100 adults)
- Headache (about 4 in 10 adolescents and 3 in 10 adults)
- Tiredness (about 1 in 3 adolescents and 1 in 4 adults)
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach ache (up to 1 in 4 adolescents and 1 in 10 adults)
- Other mild problems reported include chills, body aches, sore joints, rash, and swollen lymph glands.

Moderate problems

(Interfere with activities, but did not require medical attention)

- Pain at the injection site (about 1 in 20 adolescents and 1 in 100 adults)
- Redness or swelling (up to about 1 in 16 adolescents and 1 in 25 adults)
- Fever over 102°F (about 1 in 100 adolescents and 1 in 250 adults)
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach ache (up to 3 in 100 adolescents and 1 in 100 adults)
- Headache (1 in 300)

Severe problems

(Unable to perform usual activities; required medical attention)

- None were seen among adolescents.
- In the adult clinical trial, two adults had nervous system problems after getting the vaccine. These may or may not have been caused by the vaccine. They went away on their own and did not cause any permanent harm.
- A severe allergic reaction could occur after any vaccine. They are estimated to occur less than once in a million doses.

A person who gets these diseases is more likely to have severe complications than a person who gets Tdap vaccine.

What if there is a severe reaction?

What should I look for?

- Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

What should I do?

- Call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.
- Ask your doctor, nurse, or health department to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form.

Or you can file this report through VEARS website at www.vaers.hhs.gov, or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

- For details about the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, call 1-800-338-2382 or visit the website at www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation.

How can I learn more?

- Ask your immunization provider. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO)
  - Visit CDC’s National Immunization Program website at www.cdc.gov/nip

Vaccine Information Statement - Interim Tdap Vaccine (10/11)
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Hartford Hospital
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