

Tetanus, Diphtheria, Polio Vaccine

Vaccines have saved more lives in Canada in the last 60 years than any other medical intervention. Vaccines help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause diseases.

Tetanus, diphtheria, and polio are vaccine preventable diseases.

Tetanus ('lockjaw') is caused by bacteria found in the soil worldwide. The bacteria make a strong toxin within 3-21 days after entering the body through a cut or injury to the skin. The toxin causes painful tightening of muscles in the body. In severe cases, breathing muscles are affected. Without treatment, up to 8 in 10 people who get tetanus could die. It cannot be spread from person to person.

Diphtheria is rare in Canada; however this serious disease occurs in many countries worldwide. The bacteria are spread through the air by sneezing or coughing, and direct skin contact. Symptoms include a mild fever, sore throat, difficulty swallowing, tiredness and loss of appetite. A grayish white membrane appears in the throat within 2 to 3 days of illness which causes severe breathing problems like airway obstruction and suffocation. Within 2 to 5 days, the bacteria produce a strong toxin that can cause heart failure and paralysis. Without treatment 1 in 10 people could die.

Polio (poliomyelitis) is a disease caused by 3 types of poliovirus (type 1, type 2 and type 3). Due to immunization, type 2 poliovirus has been eliminated worldwide. However, types 1 and 3 are still found in certain countries. Polioviruses are in the stool of infected people. If stool contaminates hands, water or food, others can become infected within 3 to 35 days.

Polio symptoms include fever, tiredness, headache, nausea and vomiting. Most polio cases have no symptoms while 1% have paralysis of the arms and legs. Paralysis of the breathing and swallowing muscles can be life-threatening.

There is no known treatment for polio and previously infected people can become infected again with another type of poliovirus. Some people develop muscle weakness ('postpolio syndrome') many years after they had polio.

- **FACT:** Canada was certified as a 'polio free' country in 1994.

How can these diseases be prevented?

- Be immunized. When you / your child get immunized, you help protect others as well.
- Practice good hygiene (e.g. handwashing).

Who can get this vaccine for free?

- **The vaccine is given to persons 7 years of age and older.**
- **NOTE:** For young children, tetanus, diphtheria and polio vaccines are combined with other vaccines, such as pertussis (whooping cough) and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b. These are given as a series of injections.

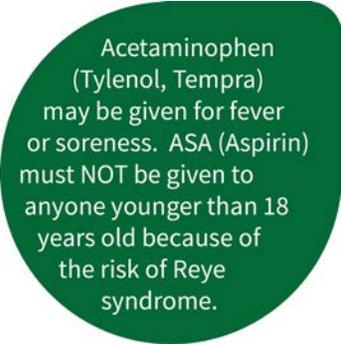
Who should not get this vaccine?

- **A mild illness, with or without a fever, is not a reason to avoid immunization.**
- Persons who have a serious illness, with or without a fever, should delay immunizations.
- People who had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of a tetanus, diphtheria or polio-containing vaccine, or any components of the vaccine.
- People younger than 7 years of age.
- People who developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting a tetanus-containing vaccine should not get this vaccine. GBS is a rare neurological condition that can result in weakness and paralysis of the body's muscles.

What are common reactions to this vaccine?

- **Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get these serious diseases.**
- Temporary soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site.
- Some individuals may experience fatigue, headache, mild fever or dizziness.
- These reactions are mild and generally last 1 to 2 days.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number.** This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in one million people who get the vaccine.



Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Tempra) may be given for fever or soreness. ASA (Aspirin) must NOT be given to anyone younger than 18 years old because of the risk of Reye syndrome.

Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, or nurse practitioner as soon as possible.

Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about your or your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If you had to take your child to a doctor, a hospital or to a health centre with a symptom that might be related to immunization.

For more information contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner, HealthLine online or by calling 811.

What does this vaccine contain?

Td POLIO ADSORBED™ contains tetanus toxoid, diphtheria toxoid, inactivated polio vaccine, 2-phenoxyethanol, aluminum phosphate, formaldehyde, polysorbate 80, bovine serum albumin, trace amounts of neomycin and polymyxin B. Thimerosal-free. Latex-free.

Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents/guardians discuss consent for immunization with their children. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for immunizations. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

To ensure that a complete immunization record is maintained, every immunization administered to an individual will be documented by Public Health into the electronic provincial immunization registry, known as Panorama. Panorama is a secure electronic system used in Saskatchewan to record and manage immunization records and the health information related to immunization for all Saskatchewan residents. Immunization records may be shared with other health care professionals to provide public health services; assist with diagnosis and treatment; and to control the spread of vaccine preventable diseases. Information about Panorama is detailed in the "Protecting the Privacy of Your Immunization Record" fact sheet.

References: Td POLIO ADSORBED™ product monograph (2010).