

Tdap Vaccine

The Tdap vaccine protects adolescents and adults from tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.⁽¹⁾

Tetanus (lockjaw) enters the body through cuts or wounds. It causes painful tightening of the muscles and leads to death in up to 2 out of 10 cases.

Diphtheria is spread from person to person and can lead to breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure, or death.

Pertussis (whooping cough) causes violent coughing that makes it hard to breathe, eat, or sleep. In teens and adults, it can cause weight loss, incontinence, or rib fractures. It also can lead to pneumonia or death.^(1,2)



Doctors recommend one dose at age 11 or 12. People who did not get it at that age should get it as soon as possible. Tdap is especially important for anyone having close contact with babies younger than 12 months.⁽²⁾

"If my child got the DTaP vaccine at 12 months, why do they need the Tdap vaccine 10 years later?"

DTaP is given to children under age 7, and Tdap, which has a reduced dose of diphtheria and pertussis vaccines, is approved for adolescents starting at age 11. Immunity weakens over time, so a booster is needed every 10 years. ⁽²⁾

Possible side effects are pain, swelling or redness where the shot was given, headache, tiredness, body aches, or mild fever. ⁽¹⁾



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1) Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: <https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center/vaccine-details/diphtheria-tetanus-and-pertussis-vaccines>

2) American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis-Tdap-Vaccine-What-You-Need-to-Know.aspx>