

DIPHTHERIA, TETANUS, AND PERTUSSIS

VACCINES

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1 Why get vaccinated?

Diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus are serious diseases.

Diphtheria

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

Tetanus (Lockjaw)

- Tetanus causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over the body.
- It can lead to “locking” of the jaw so the person cannot open his mouth or swallow. Tetanus can lead to death.

Pertussis (Whooping cough)

- Pertussis causes coughing spells so bad that it is hard for infants to eat, drink, or breathe. These can last for weeks.
- It can lead to pneumonia, seizures (jerking and staring spells), brain damage, and death.

Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccines prevent these diseases. Most children who get all their shots will be protected during childhood. Many more children would get these diseases if we stopped vaccinating.

2 Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccines

DTP vaccine

- Protects against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
- Used for many years

DTaP vaccine

- Protects against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
- Newer than DTP

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends DTaP over DTP. This is because DTaP is less likely to cause reactions than DTP.

Related vaccines

- Combinations: To reduce the number of shots a child must get, DTP or DTaP may be available in combination with other vaccines.
- DT protects against diphtheria and tetanus, *but not* pertussis. It only is recommended for children who should not get pertussis vaccine.



3 What are the risks from these vaccines?

- As with any medicine, vaccines carry a small risk of serious harm, such as a severe allergic reaction or even death.
- If there are reactions, they usually start within 3 days and don't last long.
- Most people have no serious reactions from these vaccines.

Possible reactions to these vaccines.

Mild Reactions (common)

- Sore arm or leg
- Fever
- Fussy
- Less appetite
- Tired
- Vomiting

Mild reactions are much-less likely after DTaP than after DTP.

Moderate to Serious Reactions (uncommon)

Moderate to serious reactions have been uncommon with DTP vaccine:

- Non-stop crying (3 hours or more) 100 of every 10,000 doses
- Fever of 105 or higher 30 of every 10,000 doses
- Seizure (jerking or staring) 6 of every 10,000 doses
- Child becomes limp, pale, less alert 6 of every 10,000 doses

With DTaP vaccine, these reactions are much less likely to happen.

Severe Reactions (very rare)

There are two kinds of serious reactions:

- Severe allergic reaction (breathing difficulty, shock)
- Severe brain reaction (long seizure, coma or lowered consciousness)

Is there lasting damage?

- Experts disagree on whether pertussis vaccines cause lasting brain damage.
- If they do, it is very rare.

Most experts believe serious reactions will be more rare after DTaP than after DTP.

4 When should my child get vaccinated?

Most children should get a dose at these ages:



2 Months



4 Months



6 Months



12–18 Months



4–6 Years

At 11–12 years of age and every 10 years after that you should get a booster to prevent diphtheria and tetanus.

5 What can be done to reduce possible fever and pain after this vaccine?

Give your child an *aspirin-free* pain reliever for 24 hours after the shot.

This is important if your child has had a seizure or has a parent, brother, or sister who has had a seizure.



6 Some children should not get these vaccines or should wait

Tell your doctor or nurse if your child:

- Ever had a moderate or serious reaction after getting vaccinated
- Ever had a seizure
- Has a parent, brother, or sister who has had a seizure
- Has a brain problem that is getting worse
- Now has a moderate or severe illness

Your doctor or nurse has information on what to do in this case (for example, give one of these vaccines, wait, give medicine to prevent fever).

7 What if there is a moderate to severe reaction?

What should I look for?

- Any unusual conditions, such as those in item 3

What should I do?

- Call a doctor or get the child 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 file a Vaccine Adverse Event Report (VAERS) form, or call VAERS yourself at: 1-800-822-7967.

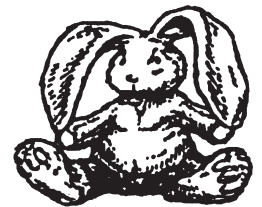
8 The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program is a federal program that helps pay for the care of those seriously injured by vaccines.

For details call 1-800-338-2382 or visit the program's website at <http://www.hrsa.dhhs.gov/bhpr/vicp/new.htm>

9 How can I learn more?

- Ask your doctor or nurse. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department. They can give you the *Parents Guide to Childhood Immunization* or other information.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Call 1-800-232-2522 (English) OR Call 1-800-232-0233 (Spanish) OR Visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nip>



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