



# PROTECTION FROM TETANUS, DIPHTHERIA and PERTUSSIS (Tdap) SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

## **Why Vaccinate for Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Tdap)?**

This vaccine is indicated for active immunization against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis in adolescents between the ages of 14-16 years in school as part of the grade 9 immunization program. This is considered to be a booster dose to the previous routine childhood immunizations. Everyone should receive this booster once in adulthood 10 years after this dose and then every 10 years as a tetanus-diphtheria vaccine.

## **What is Tetanus (Lockjaw)?**

Tetanus is caused by bacteria present in soil, dust and manure. The bacteria release a poison that could cause severe muscle spasms all over the body. Tightening of the jaw muscles can occur which prevents the person from opening their mouth. 60% of people who get tetanus will die from it.

## **What is Diphtheria?**

Diphtheria is caused by bacteria that can infect the nose and throat and prevent proper breathing. It can also cause skin or ear infections, can lead to heart failure, nerve damage, or even death. 10% of people who get diphtheria will die from it.

## **What is Pertussis (Whooping Cough)?**

Pertussis is caused by a bacterial infection that can be spread very easily from one person to another. It causes severe coughing that interferes with breathing. Complications of pertussis include seizures, convulsions, pneumonia, brain damage and death. Individuals who have been immunized may still get the disease, but in a much milder form. Pertussis is most serious in children under two years of age.

## **What are common side effects of the Tdap vaccine?**

Side effects are usually mild and last only for a few days after the vaccine is administered. These may include:

- Mild pain, swelling and redness at the administration site
- A mild fever
- Loss of appetite
- Tiredness for a day or two

**Serious side effects or allergic reactions are rare and can include anaphylaxis, hives or difficulty breathing.**

**Contact your family doctor or go to the nearest emergency room immediately if you experience any serious reactions.**

## **Who should NOT get vaccinated with Tdap?**

- Individuals who are sick with a moderate to severe acute illness with or without fever.
- Individuals who are allergic to any component of the vaccine
- Individuals who have had a severe reaction to this vaccine in the past
- Individuals with a history of Guillain-Barre syndrome within 6 weeks of a previous tetanus vaccine dose.

**For additional information and  
services contact the Regional Health  
Authority in your community**