

TDAP Vaccine

What is pertussis and how does it spread?

Pertussis is also known as “whooping cough,” and is very contagious. It is spread through infected droplets in the air. Symptoms include a burst of numerous, rapid coughs. At the end of the coughing spell, patients often make a high-pitched whooping sound. Babies and young children are often very sick, and may turn blue and vomit. Recovery usually takes 2-6 weeks, but can last for months.

How serious is pertussis?

Pertussis can be very serious, especially for babies. During the two-year period 2004–05, a total of 66 deaths from pertussis were reported to CDC, and most of these were very young babies. Infants are also more likely to suffer from pneumonia, seizures and possibly permanent brain damage as a result of pertussis. Adults can have complications such as pneumonia and broken ribs from coughing. Other reported side effects are loss of consciousness, leaking urine, hernias, angina, and weight loss.

Who should get this vaccine?

One dose of TDAP is recommended for people ages 11 – 64 years. Adults age 65 years and older, especially grandparents, child and health care providers should also be vaccinated. **TDAP vaccine is safe in pregnancy and for breastfeeding mothers.**

How is the TDAP vaccine made?

All people need protection against these three diseases—diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis. The “TDAP” vaccine is made by chemically treating the diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis toxins to make them safe yet still effective for preventing disease. They are known as “inactivated” vaccines because they do not contain live bacteria, which is why multiple doses are needed to give people immunity. Adolescents and adults who have recently received a Tetanus/Diphtheria vaccine can be given TDAP without any waiting period. The TDAP vaccine cannot cause the disease.

What side effects have been reported with this vaccine?

Local reactions, such as redness and swelling at the injection site, and generalized body aches and tiredness are not uncommon.

Can a pregnant woman receive TDAP vaccine?

TDAP vaccine is safe in pregnancy and for breastfeeding mothers. It should be given to pregnant women who are in contact with babies younger than 12 months old, are in a community where there is a pertussis outbreak, or are a child or healthcare provider. You and your doctor or midwife can discuss the risks and benefits of pertussis vaccine in pregnancy.

Who should not receive these vaccines?

Anyone who has ever had a serious allergic reaction to TDAP should not get the vaccine. Anyone with a known or possible neurologic condition should not get the vaccine until the condition is treated.

(Information from the Center for Disease Control website)