

What should I know about the Tdap vaccine?

Getting a Tdap vaccine is the best way to keep from spreading whooping cough to those who are most vulnerable—infants and young children. They are too young to get a vaccine and have the worst complications from the disease. It's especially important for brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, child care providers, and others who might provide care to get the Tdap vaccine at least 2 weeks before coming in contact with these little ones.

Here is what you'll find in this newsletter:

- What diseases the Tdap vaccine protects against
- Why and when you need to get the Tdap vaccine
- Whether or not you can get whooping cough after getting the vaccine
- How safe the vaccine is

**Questions? Contact the
Arkansas Department of Health
at 501-661-2169 or
www.healthy.arkansas.gov.**

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What is the Tdap?¹

Tdap is a booster vaccine that gives protection against a combination of three diseases—tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis or whooping cough. It is given by shot to older children, teens, and adults.

Visit flushot.healthmap.org or www.vaccines.gov to find out where you can get a Tdap vaccine.

Wait, didn't I get a shot for whooping cough as a kid?

Yes, you did. The childhood vaccine that everyone gets is called the DTaP. Experts have found that this vaccine is effective, but the protection it offers against whooping cough decreases over time. Until 2005, the only booster available protected against two diseases—diphtheria and tetanus (Td). Today the Tdap booster protects against pertussis (whooping cough) as well. It is recommended that preteens, teens, and adults get this booster.²

Do I need to get the Tdap?²

You should get the shot if:

- You never received a single dose of Tdap before.
- You are a child care provider or around infants less than 12 months old.
- You are a new parent or grandparent and have not had the Tdap shot.
- You are a health care worker with direct patient contact.
- You are a pregnant woman in her 2nd or 3rd trimester.



Credit: CDC/James Gathany (2006)

When should I get the Tdap?²

Young adults aged 11 through 18 years and adults 19 and older should get a single dose of Tdap. Adults should also replace one of their tetanus boosters (Td) that they get every 10 years with a Tdap.

You should get the Tdap vaccine at least 2 weeks before coming into close contact with an infant or young child. This is especially true for parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, childcare providers, babysitters, health care providers, and anyone else who might be a caregiver.

Can I get whooping cough even if I got the Tdap vaccine?³

Yes. If you have gotten the vaccine and become sick with whooping cough, it's likely that it won't be as serious. Generally, your cough won't last as many days and the coughing fits, whooping, and vomiting after the coughing fits won't occur as often. Keeping up to date with your recommended Tdap vaccines is the best way to protect you and your family.

Is the vaccine safe?⁴

Yes. Like any medicine, there's a small risk of a side effect or bad reaction, but most are minor and go away within a few days.

Vaccines must go through years of testing before they are licensed to be used with people. Sometimes the process can take longer than 10 years! Once in use, vaccines are constantly checked for safety and effectiveness by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and the FDA (Food and Drug Administration).

Will I need to pay for the vaccine?

Most health insurance plans cover the cost of vaccines, but you should check with your insurance company. The Affordable Care Act now requires that many insurance plans must cover the cost of preventive services, like the flu vaccine and others, at no cost to you or with a small co-pay.

If you don't have insurance or if it doesn't cover vaccines, talk with your health provider about possible options and programs available to help. You can also visit www.vaccines.gov for more information.

What are common side effects of Tdap vaccine?⁵

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- Fever
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach ache
- Chills, body aches, sore joints, and swollen glands

Where can I find more information about the Tdap vaccine?

Visit these websites for more information.

- US Department of Health and Human Services (www.vaccines.gov)
- CDC (www.cdc.gov/pertussis)
- National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (www.adultvaccination.org)

If you have any questions, please contact the Arkansas Department of Health by calling 501-661-2169 or visiting their website at www.healthy.arkansas.gov.

Sources:

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccines & Immunizations. *Vaccines and Preventable Diseases: Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Vaccination*. Retrieved February 5, 2013, from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pertussis/default.htm#vacc>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Pertussis (Whooping Cough). *Prevention*. Retrieved February 5, 2013, from <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/prevention.html>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Pertussis (Whooping Cough). *Pertussis Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved February 6, 2013, from <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/faqs.html>

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Frequently Asked Questions About Vaccine Safety. *Vaccine Safety*. Retrieved February 4, 2012, from http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccines/Common_questions.html

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccines & Immunizations. *Basics and Common Questions: Possible Side-effects from Vaccines*. Retrieved February 3, 2013, from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/side-effects.htm#td>