

Transcript

Every year, thousands of adults suffer from severe illnesses, and many may even die from diseases that can be prevented. The good news is that you can protect yourself from some of these diseases, the best way is to get vaccinated.

Tdap stands for tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Tetanus, sometimes called lockjaw, enters your body through a cut or wound and can affect your brain and nervous system causing painful muscle stiffness. Diphtheria and pertussis are both caused by bacteria that spreads from person to person through a sneeze or cough. Both lead to serious health problems. Diphtheria can cause breathing problems, heart failure, paralysis and even death. Pertussis, also called whooping cough, can cause severe coughing spells and may lead to pneumonia. The best way to prevent all three is to get vaccinated.

A vaccine contains a weakened or dead part of a germ, in this case it's a combination of the germs that cause all three diseases. The germs are too weak to make you sick, but your body reacts to the vaccine by making antibodies which fight against the germs in order to protect your body.

After getting a vaccine, when your body comes in contact with those germs again, it already has the ability to fight them and can prevent the infection.

If you are 19 years old or older and have never had a Tdap vaccine before, talk to your healthcare provider about getting vaccinated. Especially if you are a healthcare worker, a caregiver to an infant under the age of 1 or you are pregnant in your third trimester. You may also be given this vaccine if you have a severe cut or burn and have not been vaccinated before. Injuries like this can increase your risk for tetanus.

To stay protected against tetanus and diphtheria, you may also be given a booster called the Td booster once every 10 years.

If you have ever had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine, tell your healthcare provider before getting this vaccine. If you are allergic to the ingredients in this vaccine, you should not get it.

Talk to your healthcare provider before getting the Tdap vaccine if you have epilepsy or other nervous system problems or if you have ever had Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

Most vaccines are given by injection. If you aren't feeling well when your injection is scheduled, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist. She may recommend you wait until you feel better to get the vaccine.

The Tdap vaccine is safe. But as with any medication, there is a small risk of side effects. The most common side effect is allergic reaction at the injection site. Look for redness, swelling and soreness at the site. These should go away after a few days. Less common side effects may include a mild fever, headache, nausea or vomiting, muscle aches, feeling tired and swollen glands.

If you have a severe allergic reaction like trouble breathing, hives, swelling of your face or throat; or if you have chest pain, fast heartbeat, seizures, dizziness or feel like you are going to pass out, call 911 and get help immediately.

This is not the complete list of side effects. Make sure you discuss all possible side effects with your healthcare provider.

You can get your Tdap vaccine at your next healthcare appointment, or you can get it at your local pharmacy or community health clinic.

It is a good idea to keep a list of all vaccines you get so you don't double-up in the future. Ask your healthcare provider for a print-out of your records or keep a log yourself. Your records should include the date, type of vaccine dose and where you got it. Let a family member know where you keep this list in case of emergency.

Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis can cause serious, sometimes life-threatening health problems, but they can be prevented. If you have not had the Tdap vaccine before, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about getting vaccinated. It is the best way to prevent infection and stay healthy.