

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.

Td stands for tetanus and diphtheria. 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 is an infection caused by bacteria that spreads from person to person through a sneeze or cough. Diphtheria can cause breathing problems, heart failure, paralysis, and even death. The best way to prevent both tetanus and diphtheria is to stay up to date with your vaccines.

A vaccine contains a weakened or dead part of a germ; in this case it is a combination of the germs that cause both 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 you.

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. But over time, some vaccines may weaken and you are no longer fully protected. In this case your healthcare provider will recommend a booster. A booster amount of vaccine exposes your body to the germ again, allowing your body to build the antibodies back up to a level needed to prevent infection.

The Td booster is usually given once every 10 years to continually protect you from tetanus and diphtheria. You may also be given this vaccine if you have a severe cut or burn. Injuries like this can increase your risk for tetanus.

Most vaccines are given by injection. 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 Td booster if you have epilepsy or other nervous system problems, or if you have ever had Guillain-Barre Syndrome. 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 Td booster 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 and feeling tired.

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 Td booster at your next healthcare appointment, or you can get it at your local pharmacy or community health clinic.

It's 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 and diphtheria can cause serious, sometimes life-threatening health problems, but they can be prevented. If you have not had the Td booster before, or it has been longer than 10 years, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about getting vaccinated. It is the best way to prevent infection and stay healthy.