



PHARMACIST

POCKET GUIDE: Tdap VACCINE

Important facts about pertussis:

- Pertussis spreads easily from person to person through coughing and sneezing.¹ Persons with pertussis are most infectious through the third week after the coughing fits begin. Pertussis can be especially serious in young infants and in rare cases can lead to death²
- Teens and adults with pertussis, especially those who did not get pertussis vaccines, may experience bursts of numerous and rapid coughs (paroxysms). The cough can cause complications, such as difficulty sleeping, weight loss, urinary incontinence, syncope, and broken ribs^{2,3}

Who should be vaccinated?

General Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)^{4,5}:

- **Adolescents 11–18 years of age:** These persons should receive a single dose of Tdap, preferably at a preventive care visit at age 11–12 years. To ensure continued protection against tetanus and diphtheria, 1 booster dose of either Td or Tdap should be administered every 10 years throughout life
- **Adults 19 years of age and older:** Regardless of the interval since their last tetanus or diphtheria toxoid-containing vaccine, persons aged ≥ 19 years who have never received a dose of Tdap should receive 1 dose of Tdap. Booster doses of either Td or Tdap should be administered every 10 years throughout life
- **Pregnant women:** Should receive 1 dose of Tdap during each pregnancy. Tdap should be administered at 27–36 weeks' gestation, preferably during the earlier part of this period, although it may be administered at any time during pregnancy
- **Wound management:** Appropriate persons aged ≥ 11 years whose previous tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine was >5 years. Tdap is preferred for persons who have not previously received Tdap or whose Tdap history is unknown. For a pregnant woman, Tdap should be used. For nonpregnant persons with documentation of previous Tdap vaccination, either Td or Tdap may be used

Tdap = tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis;

Td = tetanus and diphtheria

Please refer to the CDC for the complete Tdap vaccination recommendations.

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Who should not be vaccinated?

- Patients who have had a life-threatening allergic reaction (eg, anaphylaxis) to a dose of Tdap or to any diphtheria toxoid, tetanus toxoid, or pertussis-containing vaccine, or have a severe allergy to any component of this vaccine⁵
- Patients who developed encephalopathy (eg, coma, decreased level of consciousness, prolonged seizures) not attributable to another identifiable cause within 7 days of administration of a previous dose of DTP, DTaP, or Tdap^{4,5}

Precautions should be considered when consulting with patients who⁵:

- Have a moderate or severe acute illness with or without fever
- Had Guillain-Barré syndrome within 6 weeks after a previous dose of a tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine
- Have a history of Arthus-type hypersensitivity reactions after a previous dose of a tetanus- or diphtheria toxoid-containing vaccine; defer vaccination until at least 10 years have elapsed since the last tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine
- Have a progressive or unstable neurological disorder, uncontrolled seizures, or progressive encephalopathy; defer vaccination until treatment has been initiated and the condition has stabilized

Refer to the prescribing information for each vaccine product for full warnings and precautions.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About whooping cough. Reviewed April 2, 2024. Accessed July 21, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/index.html> 2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Chapter 16: Pertussis. Reviewed April 12, 2024. Accessed July 21, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/pinkbook/hcp/table-of-contents/chapter-16-pertussis.html> 3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Clinical features of pertussis. Reviewed April 2, 2024. Accessed July 21, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/hcp/clinical-signs/index.html> 4. Use of tetanus toxoid, reduced diphtheria toxoid, and acellular pertussis vaccines: updated recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices — United States, 2019. Reviewed January 23, 2020. Accessed May 19, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6903a5.htm> 5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Diphtheria vaccine recommendations. Reviewed May 12, 2025. Accessed July 21, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/diphtheria/hcp/vaccine-recommendations/index.html>

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