

Even **One** death that can be prevented by a vaccine is one too many

Half of all U.S. residents age 20 or older lack protection from tetanus and diphtheria infection. For people 70 or older, that figure rises to 70%. These are serious numbers for preventable diseases that can sicken and kill people needlessly.

If you've had tetanus or diphtheria, you can get it again. This is more of a problem with tetanus. However, you still need to keep your protection strong with a Td booster shot every 10 years.

If you had a recent tetanus shot for an injury, you may still need protection against diphtheria—especially if you're planning an overseas trip. Check your medical records to see if it was a Td booster or a tetanus-only shot.

The World Health Organization lists 87 countries where diphtheria is a serious health problem. Here are some of them, by region:

Africa – all countries except Libya, Morocco, Tunisia
Americas – Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti
Asia/Pacific Rim – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam, Yemen
Europe – Albania, all countries of the former Soviet Union

If you plan to visit any of these countries, make sure your Td protection is current. The cost and discomfort of prevention are small. The consequences of contracting either disease are not.



Power of



As a home improvement expert, I understand the importance of safety and prevention. That's why I'm working with the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

and the National Coalition for Adult Immunization on the *Power of 10* campaign, to help educate Americans about the need for routine tetanus and diphtheria boosters.

I know I run the risk of tetanus exposure from worksite injuries, and my travel outside the United States can take me to places where diphtheria is still a problem.

You may be surprised to learn that you could also get a tetanus infection from minor cuts and scrapes caused by household chores, outdoor leisure activities, animal and insect bites—even something as simple as a splinter. Likewise, infectious diphtheria bacteria continue to circulate in many countries around the world and even in some parts of the United States and Canada.

The good news is that you can protect yourself *before* exposure occurs, simply by keeping your tetanus and diphtheria immunization up-to-date. So do yourself a favor—if it's been 10, do it again. Check with your health care provider about your tetanus and diphtheria booster status—and take your own step towards safety and prevention.

For more information about the *Power of 10* campaign, including more details about tetanus and diphtheria, visit www.nfid.org.

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Tetanus and diphtheria infections can be fatal, and childhood vaccines wear off.

Keep yourself protected with a Td booster shot every 10 years.





Protection is safe, easy and effective

Vaccines to prevent tetanus and diphtheria are given as:

- An initial series of shots to establish protection, usually during infancy and early childhood.
- A booster every 10 years, starting in adolescence, to keep immunity strong.

In the United States, most children receive shots to protect against tetanus and diphtheria infections (combined with whooping cough) before they start school. But these vaccinations weren't routine until the 1940s, and immunity weakens over time.

If you:

- can't remember your last Td booster,
 - aren't sure you ever had a Td vaccination, or
 - are 60 or older,
- you may need a Td vaccination now.

If you're not sure, call your doctor. Discuss your normal activities, travel plans and vaccination history to find out if you should get a Td booster shot today.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone should have the primary Td vaccination series and maintain protection levels with boosters every 10 years.

Most people who receive the Td vaccine will have no side effects. Some people will have mild reactions including soreness, redness or swelling; in very rare cases, some people can have a serious allergic reaction which may include shortness of breath and dizziness. Remember, however, that immunization is the most important way we have of protecting ourselves, and others, against these serious diseases.



The Td vaccine can prevent serious illness and save lives

Tetanus bacteria are widespread in the environment — in soil, dust, and animals:

- They can enter the body from any skin puncture: a tiny pinprick, splinter, scratch, or deep gash.
- Ordinary activities — cleaning the house, preparing food, planting bulbs, trimming hedges, biking, running — can lead to an injury which may put you in contact with the tetanus bacteria.
- Recently, tetanus cases have also been seen among people who use illegal intravenous drugs, as well as people with self-performed tattoos or body piercings.
- The most common form of tetanus infection can cause paralysis. Symptoms usually start with lockjaw, followed by a stiff neck and trouble swallowing.
- Symptoms appear 8 days after exposure to the bacteria on average but can show up any time from 3 days to 3 weeks later.
- Even with proper treatment, tetanus infection kills about 1 of every 10 people in this country who get it.

Diphtheria is common in 87 countries (see next page for a list) and even circulates in some parts of the United States and Canada.

- It's caused by diphtheria bacteria that are spread from person-to-person.
- The most common form is also the most dangerous. It infects the throat and tonsils.
- Bacteria growing in infected areas produce a poison that can cause heart failure and paralysis.
- Symptoms usually appear from 2 to 5 days after exposure to the diphtheria bacteria.
- When it's not treated, diphtheria infection kills 5%-10% of people who get it. For children aged 5 or younger and adults 40 or older, the death rate can reach 20%.

Because a large number of people were not immunized, an outbreak of diphtheria in the former Soviet Union in 1990 quickly became an epidemic resulting in more than 157,000 cases with 5,000 deaths.

Are you at risk for tetanus or diphtheria infections?

self-quiz:

yes no

Do you garden or do yard work as a job or hobby?

Do you get cuts or scrapes from ordinary activities — on the job, around the house, or playing sports?

Do you ever get splinters or scratches from wood products or branches?

Do you live or work with animals that could bite you, even pets?

Do you plan to visit any other countries?

You may be surprised to learn that a “yes” answer to any of these questions means that you may be exposed to a potentially fatal disease.

Fortunately, there's an easy way to protect yourself without giving up your hobbies, quitting your job, or avoiding foreign travel: the Td booster shot, a combined tetanus and diphtheria vaccine.

