

Protecting Your Child: What Every Parent Should Know



Diphtheria killed thousands of children in the U.S. each year before the vaccine.



The Vaccine

DTaP (Diphtheria component)

- 1890s - Horse serum antitoxin
- 1920s - Inactivated toxoid vaccine introduced
- 1940s - Diphtheria toxoid combined with tetanus and pertussis (DT/DTP)
- 1990s to today - Combined with acellular pertussis (DTap/Tdap)

How it works:

- Teaches the immune system to recognize the diphtheria toxin without using a live bacteria.

Dosage:

- 5 doses given at 2, 4, 6, and 15-18 months, and 4-6 years
- Mild side effects: redness, swelling or low-grade fever



Over time, the diphtheria vaccine has become **cleaner, safer, and gentler** while still protecting powerfully against a deadly disease.

Diphtheria

What is Diphtheria?



A bacterial infection that forms a thick coating in the throat and nose, making it difficult to breathe or swallow.

Diphtheria can lead to **heart failure, paralysis, or death** especially in young children.

Who's most vulnerable? Children under 5 and adults over 40. Diphtheria is rare in the U.S. and Western Europe where vaccination coverage is high. People who are unvaccinated or under-vaccinated are at the highest risk, especially if traveling or have close contact with people from low-vaccination coverage areas.

Is the Vaccine Safe? Yes.

- **Improved over time.** Today's diphtheria vaccine is highly purified, safe, and very well tolerated.
- **Proven safe in major studies.** Reviewed in **decades of real-world data** across millions of children worldwide. Endorsed by **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** for safety and effectiveness.
- Ongoing safety monitoring by **VAERS** and Vaccine Safety Datalink.



No credible evidence has ever linked this vaccine to long-term harm.

Support & Guidance

Talk to your pediatrician or family doctor as they know your child's health and vaccine schedule best.

Trusted Resources: [AAP HealthyChildren.org](https://www.aap.org/healthychildren)

Alternatives?

- There is **no safe alternative** to vaccination.
- "Natural immunity" can come at the cost of **severe illness or death**.
- Delaying leaves your child **vulnerable** during critical growth years.



Your parenting instincts matter. We're here to answer your questions and support your informed, confident decisions. Let's protect your child - together.