

Tetanus (Lockjaw)

Protecting Your Child: What Every Parent Should Know

What is Tetanus (Lockjaw)?



An illness caused by a toxin from bacteria found in soil, dust, or manure that enters the body through cuts or puncture wounds.

Causes painful muscle spasms, "lockjaw," breathing problems, and can lead to death in 10-20% of cases.

Who's most vulnerable? Unvaccinated children and adults, particularly after injuries.



Tetanus is one of the few vaccine-preventable diseases not spread person-to-person.



The Vaccine

DTaP (Tetanus component)

- 1940s as part of DTP
- 1990s as part of DTaP

How it works:

- Uses a **toxoid** (inactivated toxin) to build immunity safely.

Dosage:

- 5 doses between 2 months and 6 years
- Booster (Td or Tdap) every 10 years for continued protection
- Mild side effects: fever and soreness which resolve quickly

Today's tetanus vaccine is much **cleaner and gentler** than the early versions with far fewer side effects, **but the same strong protection**.

Is the Vaccine Safe? Yes.

- **Over 70 years** of use with major improvements.
 - Early tetanus toxoid (1920s-1940s): Crude preparations, with lots of leftover proteins and impurities leading to more side effects.
 - Mid-Century (1950s-1970s): Improved manufacturing and purification steps resulting in a safer and better tolerated vaccine.
 - Modern era (1990s-today): Highly purified toxoid with advanced filtration and detoxification methods, plus no thimerosal for kids, leading to very low rates of reaction and just mild soreness at the shot site.
- **Constant monitoring** ensures ongoing safety.



Tetanus still kills people every year globally. Vaccination prevents this completely.

Support & Guidance

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

Trusted Resources: AAP HealthyChildren.org

Alternatives?

- No natural immunity. **Even recovering from tetanus doesn't protect you in the future.**
- Without the vaccine, your child is at risk with any deep cut or wound.



This simple vaccine **offers lifelong peace of mind.**



Vaccinating is a safe, proven step that protects your child now and into adulthood. We're here to answer your questions, support your decisions, and celebrate the protection you give your family.

