

# DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) Vaccine: *What You Need to Know*

Many Vaccine Information Statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See [www.immunize.org/vis](http://www.immunize.org/vis)

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## 1 Why get vaccinated?

DTaP vaccine can prevent **diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis**.

Diphtheria and pertussis spread from person to person. Tetanus enters the body through cuts or wounds.

- **DIPHThERIA (D)** can lead to difficulty breathing, heart failure, paralysis, or death.
- **TETANUS (T)** causes painful stiffening of the muscles. Tetanus can lead to serious health problems, including being unable to open the mouth, having trouble swallowing and breathing, or death.
- **PERTUSSIS (aP)**, also known as “whooping cough,” can cause uncontrollable, violent coughing which makes it hard to breathe, eat, or drink. Pertussis can be extremely serious in babies and young children, causing pneumonia, convulsions, brain damage, or death. In teens and adults, it can cause weight loss, loss of bladder control, passing out, and rib fractures from severe coughing.

## 2 DTaP vaccine

DTaP is only for children younger than 7 years old. Different vaccines against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap and Td) are available for older children, adolescents, and adults.

It is recommended that children receive 5 doses of DTaP, usually at the following ages:

- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 15–18 months
- 4–6 years

DTaP may be given as a stand-alone vaccine, or as part of a combination vaccine (a type of vaccine that combines more than one vaccine together into one shot).

DTaP may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

## 3 Talk with your health care provider

Tell your vaccine provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an **allergic reaction after a previous dose of any vaccine that protects against tetanus, diphtheria, or pertussis**, or has any **severe, life-threatening allergies**.
- Has had a **coma, decreased level of consciousness, or prolonged seizures within 7 days after a previous dose of any pertussis vaccine (DTP or DTaP)**.
- Has **seizures or another nervous system problem**.
- Has ever had **Guillain-Barré Syndrome** (also called GBS).
- Has had **severe pain or swelling after a previous dose of any vaccine that protects against tetanus or diphtheria**.

In some cases, your child’s health care provider may decide to postpone DTaP vaccination to a future visit.

Children with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. Children who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting DTaP.

Your child’s health care provider can give you more information.



## 4 Risks of a vaccine reaction

- Soreness or swelling where the shot was given, fever, fussiness, feeling tired, loss of appetite, and vomiting sometimes happen after DTaP vaccination.
- More serious reactions, such as seizures, non-stop crying for 3 hours or more, or high fever (over 105°F) after DTaP vaccination happen much less often. Rarely, the vaccine is followed by swelling of the entire arm or leg, especially in older children when they receive their fourth or fifth dose.
- Very rarely, long-term seizures, coma, lowered consciousness, or permanent brain damage may happen after DTaP vaccination.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

## 5 What if there is a serious problem?

An allergic reaction could occur after the vaccinated person leaves the clinic. If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call **9-1-1** and get the person to the nearest hospital.

For other signs that concern you, call your health care provider.

Adverse reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your health care provider will usually file this report, or you can do it yourself. Visit the VAERS website at [www.vaers.hhs.gov](http://www.vaers.hhs.gov) or call **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS is only for reporting reactions, and VAERS staff do not give medical advice.*

## 6 The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines. Visit the VICP website at [www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation](http://www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation) or call **1-800-338-2382** to learn about the program and about filing a claim. There is a time limit to file a claim for compensation.

## 7 How can I learn more?

- Ask your health care provider.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
  - Call **1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO)** or
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Vaccine Information Statement (Interim)  
DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus,  
Pertussis) Vaccine



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# Polio Vaccine:

## What You Need to Know

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### 1 Why get vaccinated?

**Polio vaccine** can prevent **polio**.

Polio (or poliomyelitis) is a disabling and life-threatening disease caused by poliovirus, which can infect a person's spinal cord, leading to paralysis.

Most people infected with poliovirus have no symptoms, and many recover without complications. Some people will experience sore throat, fever, tiredness, nausea, headache, or stomach pain.

A smaller group of people will develop more serious symptoms that affect the brain and spinal cord:

- Paresthesia (feeling of pins and needles in the legs),
- Meningitis (infection of the covering of the spinal cord and/or brain), or
- Paralysis (can't move parts of the body) or weakness in the arms, legs, or both.

Paralysis is the most severe symptom associated with polio because it can lead to permanent disability and death.

Improvements in limb paralysis can occur, but in some people new muscle pain and weakness may develop 15 to 40 years later. This is called post-polio syndrome.

Polio has been eliminated from the United States, but it still occurs in other parts of the world. The best way to protect yourself and keep the United States polio-free is to maintain high immunity (protection) in the population against polio through vaccination.

### 2 Polio vaccine

**Children** should usually get 4 doses of polio vaccine, at 2 months, 4 months, 6–18 months, and 4–6 years of age.

Most **adults** do not need polio vaccine because they were already vaccinated against polio as children. Some adults are at higher risk and should consider polio vaccination, including:

- people traveling to certain parts of the world,
- laboratory workers who might handle poliovirus, and
- health care workers treating patients who could have polio.

Polio vaccine may be given as a stand-alone vaccine, or as part of a combination vaccine (a type of vaccine that combines more than one vaccine together into one shot).

Polio vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

### 3 Talk with your health care provider

Tell your vaccine provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an **allergic reaction after a previous dose of polio vaccine, or has any severe, life-threatening allergies.**

In some cases, your health care provider may decide to postpone polio vaccination to a future visit.



People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting polio vaccine.

Your health care provider can give you more information.

#### 4 Risks of a vaccine reaction

- A sore spot with redness, swelling, or pain where the shot is given can happen after polio vaccine.

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

#### 5 What if there is a serious problem?

An allergic reaction could occur after the vaccinated person leaves the clinic. If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call **9-1-1** and get the person to the nearest hospital.

For other signs that concern you, call your health care provider.

Adverse reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your health care provider will usually file this report, or you can do it yourself. Visit the VAERS website at [www.vaers.hhs.gov](http://www.vaers.hhs.gov) or call **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS is only for reporting reactions, and VAERS staff do not give medical advice.*

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# MMR Vaccine (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella): *What You Need to Know*

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## 1 Why get vaccinated?

MMR vaccine can prevent **measles, mumps, and rubella**.

- **MEASLES (M)** can cause fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes, commonly followed by a rash that covers the whole body. It can lead to seizures (often associated with fever), ear infections, diarrhea, and pneumonia. Rarely, measles can cause brain damage or death.
- **MUMPS (M)** can cause fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, and swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears. It can lead to deafness, swelling of the brain and/or spinal cord covering, painful swelling of the testicles or ovaries, and, very rarely, death.
- **RUBELLA (R)** can cause fever, sore throat, rash, headache, and eye irritation. It can cause arthritis in up to half of teenage and adult women. If a woman gets rubella while she is pregnant, she could have a miscarriage or her baby could be born with serious birth defects.

Most people who are vaccinated with MMR will be protected for life. Vaccines and high rates of vaccination have made these diseases much less common in the United States.

## 2 MMR vaccine

**Children** need 2 doses of MMR vaccine, usually:

- First dose at 12 through 15 months of age
- Second dose at 4 through 6 years of age

**Infants who will be traveling outside the United States when they are between 6 and 11 months of age** should get a dose of MMR vaccine before travel. The child should still get 2 doses at the recommended ages for long-lasting protection.

**Older children, adolescents, and adults** also need 1 or 2 doses of MMR vaccine if they are not already immune to measles, mumps, and rubella. Your

health care provider can help you determine how many doses you need.

A third dose of MMR might be recommended in certain mumps outbreak situations.

MMR vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines. Children 12 months through 12 years of age might receive MMR vaccine together with varicella vaccine in a single shot, known as MMRV. Your health care provider can give you more information.

## 3 Talk with your health care provider

Tell your vaccine provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an **allergic reaction after a previous dose of MMR or MMRV vaccine**, or has any **severe, life-threatening allergies**.
- Is **pregnant**, or thinks she might be pregnant.
- Has a **weakened immune system**, or has a **parent, brother, or sister with a history of hereditary or congenital immune system problems**.
- Has ever had a **condition that makes him or her bruise or bleed easily**.
- Has recently had a **blood transfusion or received other blood products**.
- Has **tuberculosis**.
- Has **gotten any other vaccines in the past 4 weeks**.

In some cases, your health care provider may decide to postpone MMR vaccination to a future visit.

People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting MMR vaccine.

Your health care provider can give you more information.



## 4 Risks of a vaccine reaction

- Soreness, redness, or rash where the shot is given and rash all over the body can happen after MMR vaccine.
- Fever or swelling of the glands in the cheeks or neck sometimes occur after MMR vaccine.
- More serious reactions happen rarely. These can include seizures (often associated with fever), temporary pain and stiffness in the joints (mostly in teenage or adult women), pneumonia, swelling of the brain and/or spinal cord covering, or temporary low platelet count which can cause unusual bleeding or bruising.
- In people with serious immune system problems, this vaccine may cause an infection which may be life-threatening. People with serious immune system problems should not get MMR vaccine.

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

## 5 What if there is a serious problem?

An allergic reaction could occur after the vaccinated person leaves the clinic. If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call **9-1-1** and get the person to the nearest hospital.

For other signs that concern you, call your health care provider.

Adverse reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your health care provider will usually file this report, or you can do it yourself. Visit the VAERS website at [www.vaers.hhs.gov](http://www.vaers.hhs.gov) or call **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS is only for reporting reactions, and VAERS staff do not give medical advice.*

## 6 The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines. Visit the VICP website at [www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation](http://www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation) or call **1-800-338-2382** to learn about the program and about filing a claim. There is a time limit to file a claim for compensation.

## 7 How can I learn more?

- Ask your healthcare provider.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
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Vaccine Information Statement (Interim)  
**MMR Vaccine**



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# Varicella (Chickenpox) Vaccine:

## What You Need to Know

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### 1 Why get vaccinated?

Varicella vaccine can prevent **chickenpox**.

**Chickenpox** can cause an itchy rash that usually lasts about a week. It can also cause fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, and headache. It can lead to skin infections, pneumonia, inflammation of the blood vessels, and swelling of the brain and/or spinal cord covering, and infections of the bloodstream, bone, or joints. Some people who get chickenpox get a painful rash called shingles (also known as herpes zoster) years later.

Chickenpox is usually mild but it can be serious in infants under 12 months of age, adolescents, adults, pregnant women, and people with a weakened immune system. Some people get so sick that they need to be hospitalized. It doesn't happen often, but people can die from chickenpox.

Most people who are vaccinated with 2 doses of varicella vaccine will be protected for life.

### 2 Varicella vaccine

**Children** need 2 doses of varicella vaccine, usually:

- First dose: 12 through 15 months of age
- Second dose: 4 through 6 years of age

**Older children, adolescents, and adults** also need 2 doses of varicella vaccine if they are not already immune to chickenpox.

Varicella vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines. Also, a child between 12 months and 12 years of age might receive varicella vaccine together with MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine in a single shot, known as MMRV. Your health care provider can give you more information.

### 3 Talk with your health care provider

Tell your vaccine provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an **allergic reaction after a previous dose of varicella vaccine**, or has any **severe, life-threatening allergies**.
- Is **pregnant**, or thinks she might be pregnant.
- Has a **weakened immune system**, or has a **parent, brother, or sister with a history of hereditary or congenital immune system problems**.
- Is **taking salicylates** (such as aspirin).
- Has recently **had a blood transfusion or received other blood products**.
- Has **tuberculosis**.
- Has **gotten any other vaccines in the past 4 weeks**.

In some cases, your health care provider may decide to postpone varicella vaccination to a future visit.

People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting varicella vaccine.

Your health care provider can give you more information.

### 4 Risks of a vaccine reaction

- Sore arm from the injection, fever, or redness or rash where the shot is given can happen after varicella vaccine.
- More serious reactions happen very rarely. These can include pneumonia, infection of the brain and/or spinal cord covering, or seizures that are often associated with fever.
- In people with serious immune system problems, this vaccine may cause an infection which may



be life-threatening. People with serious immune system problems should not get varicella vaccine.

It is possible for a vaccinated person to develop a rash. If this happens, the varicella vaccine virus could be spread to an unprotected person. Anyone who gets a rash should stay away from people with a weakened immune system and infants until the rash goes away. Talk with your health care provider to learn more.

Some people who are vaccinated against chickenpox get shingles (herpes zoster) years later. This is much less common after vaccination than after chickenpox disease.

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

## 5 What if there is a serious problem?

An allergic reaction could occur after the vaccinated person leaves the clinic. If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call **9-1-1** and get the person to the nearest hospital.

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Vaccine Information Statement (Interim)  
**Varicella Vaccine**



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