



Tetanus Prevention

The risk of tetanus among disaster survivors and emergency responders can best be minimized by following standard immunization recommendations and providing proper wound care.

Key points to remember:

Patients without a clear history of at least three tetanus vaccinations who have any wound other than clean and minor **NEED tetanus immune globulin (TIG)** not just Td.

Tetanus in the United States is most commonly reported in **older persons** who are less likely to be adequately vaccinated than younger persons. In 2004, 71% of the 34 cases reported were among persons >40 years of age and 47% were among persons >60 years of age.

Older **women** are especially susceptible; a majority of those > 55 years of age do not have protective levels of tetanus antibody.

Diabetics are at increased risk. Reported tetanus is about 3 times more common in diabetics and fatalities are about 4 times more common.

Non-acute wounds (e.g., chronic ulcers, gangrene, abscesses/cellulitis) account for about 1 in 6 cases of reported tetanus; 1 in 12 reported cases had **no reported injury or lesion**.

Wound management:

Vaccination history	Clean, minor wounds	All other wounds
Unknown or < 3 doses	Td or Tdap (Tdap preferred for ages 11-18)	Td or Tdap (Tdap preferred for ages 11-18) PLUS tetanus immune globulin (TIG)
3 or more doses and ≤5 years since last dose		
3 or more doses and 6-10 years since last dose		Td or Tdap (Tdap preferred for ages 11-18)
3 or more doses and >10 years since last dose	Td or Tdap (Tdap preferred for ages 11-18)	Td or Tdap (Tdap preferred for ages 11-18)

See <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00041645.htm>

Routine vaccination:

Primary series of diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (DTaP) in infancy and childhood. (Recommended schedule is 2,4,6, months, 15-18 months, 4-6 years. See <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule.htm>)

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Booster shots of tetanus, diphtheria (Td) or tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap) at age 11-12 and then every 10 years. (Tdap is preferred for adolescents 11-18 years of age http://www.cdc.gov/nip/pr/pr_tdap_jun2005.htm.)

Persons who did not receive DTP or DTaP as a child, or whose tetanus vaccination history is not known should receive a primary series of three doses of adult Td. The first two doses should be separated by 4 weeks and the third dose should follow the second by at least 6 months. For persons 11-64 years of age Tdap may be substituted for ONE of these doses, preferably the first dose. Tdap should be substituted for ONE of these doses for persons 11-18 years of age.

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters,
or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).

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