

Tetanus Shots – Better Health

Rusty Nail Tetanus Symptoms:

Tetanus refers to a major and potentially life-threatening condition. Stepping on a nail makes you prone to developing tetanus because the dirt and rust on it can carry the “Clostridium tetani” bacteria. You can get a tetanus shot to protect your body from the “C. tetani” virus for up to 10 years. You need to be immunized every 10 years. If you do step on a rusty nail that penetrates the skin, call your doctor.



Muscle Spasms:

When the nail penetrates your foot, the C. tetani bacteria can spread into your blood and affect the muscles of your jaw, stomach, neck, back, face and chest, states the Mayo Clinic. You may experience intense spasms characterized by intense pain and the inability to move the affected region of the body. If tetany (sustained muscle contractions) is left untreated, muscle tears and fractures can result.

Lock Jaw and Opisthotonos:

MedlinePlus states that mild jaw muscle spasms can lead to stiffness and result in a condition informally called "lock jaw." This is a dangerous condition that can prevent you from speaking and eating. Opisthotonos refers to an abnormal posture that occurs when your back, neck, chest and stomach muscles are stiff. Your back will severely arch and your head will also extend. This is a medical emergency; get to your doctor immediately or call 911.

Breathing Problems:

The Mayo Clinic states that the C. tetani bacteria can spread to your respiratory muscles, constrict them and affect your breathing. This is a medical emergency; call 911.

Other Symptoms:

According to MedlinePlus, other tetanus symptoms include drooling, sweating and irritability. You may also be feverish, have difficulty swallowing and become incontinent of urine or stool. Call your doctor if any of these symptoms develop.

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Tetanus is a vaccine preventable infection that is caused by the *C. tetani* bacteria. Unvaccinated children can develop symptoms of tetanus about two weeks after getting a wound that is contaminated by tetanus bacteria, leading to painful muscle spasms.

Although stepping on a rusty nail is often the classic way that parents think of as the way that their kids can get tetanus, it is important to remember that almost any dirty wound can put them at risk. That is because tetanus spores live in the soil and so can contaminate scrapes, burns, dog bites, any break in the skin, and even spider bites.

There is a million different ways a person can get *C. tetani* bacteria.

With rough, bumpy, and maybe violent times coming ahead, it is best to be up on your shots for you and your family.

What is the schedule for active immunization (tetanus shots)?

All children should be immunized against tetanus by receiving a series of five DTaP vaccinations which generally are started at 2 months of age and completed at approximately 5 years of age. Booster vaccination is recommended at 11 years of age with Tdap.

Follow-up booster vaccination is recommended every 10 years thereafter. While a 10-year period of protection exists after the basic childhood series is completed, should a potentially contaminated wound occur, an "early" booster may be given in selected cases and the 10 years "clock" reset.

<http://www.medicinenet.com/tetanus/article.htm>

Tetanus (lockjaw) is a serious disease that causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over the body. It can lead to "locking" of the jaw so the victim cannot open his mouth or swallow. Tetanus leads to death in about 1 in 10 cases. Several vaccines are used to prevent tetanus among children, adolescents, and adults including DTaP, Tdap, DT, and Td.

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At a Glance (CDC):

Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis Vaccines

There are four combination vaccines used to prevent diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis: DTaP, Tdap, DT, and Td. Two of these (DTaP and DT) are given to children younger than 7 years of age, and two (Tdap and Td) are given to older children and adults. Several other combination vaccines contain DTaP along with other childhood vaccines.

Children should get 5 doses of DTaP, one dose at each of the following ages: 2, 4, 6, and 15-18 months and 4-6 years. DT does not contain pertussis, and is used as a substitute for DTaP for children who cannot tolerate pertussis vaccine.

Td is a tetanus-diphtheria vaccine given to adolescents and adults as a booster shot every 10 years, or after an exposure to tetanus under some circumstances. Tdap is similar to Td but also containing protection against pertussis. A single dose of Tdap is recommended for adolescents 11 or 12 years of age, or in place of one Td booster in older adolescents and adults age 19 through 64.

[Upper-case letters in these abbreviations denote full-strength doses of diphtheria (D) and tetanus (T) toxoids and pertussis (P) vaccine. Lower-case “d” and “p” denote reduced doses of diphtheria and pertussis used in the adolescent/adult-formulations. The “a” in DTaP and Tdap stands for “acellular,” meaning that the pertussis component contains only a part of the pertussis organism.]

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/tetanus/default.htm>

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