

Tetanus Immune Globulin (TIG)

Get protected, get immunized.

- Immune globulins are passive immunization agents. This means they give quick, short-term protection.
- For long-term protection, you need a vaccine.

What is tetanus immune globulin?

Tetanus immune globulin (TIG) is made from human blood and contains antibodies to tetanus. It provides fast protection, but the protection is not long lasting.

What is tetanus?

Tetanus is a bacterial infection that causes uncontrolled movements (spasms) in the muscles of the jaw and other muscles of the body.

Tetanus can cause:

- “lock jaw” where the mouth stays closed and cannot open widely
- trouble swallowing and breathing, seizures, and death

Tetanus infection is rare because there has been a vaccine since the 1940s. Most people have been immunized against it.

Who is most at risk?

If someone is not immunized and gets tetanus, about 1 to 8 out of 10 people can die from it. Babies and older adults are most at risk.

Older adults, people who were born outside of Canada, and people who do not have a record of being completely immunized for tetanus are more likely to have no protection for tetanus.

How does it spread?

Tetanus bacteria are common in soil, dust, manure (animal stool used as fertilizer), and human stool (poop). They can get into the body through a cut on the skin or an animal bite. Tetanus does not spread from person to person.

Who should get TIG?

Tetanus can happen when tetanus bacteria get into a wound, such as a cut, puncture, burn, or frostbite. You may get TIG when you have not had a primary series (at least 3 doses) of a tetanus vaccine and:

- You get a wound that might have tetanus bacteria. For example, there is soil or stool in the wound.
- You get a wound and the surrounding skin or tissue dies.

If you have a weakened immune system, you may need TIG after a wound even if your tetanus vaccines are up to date.

If you have had a primary series of a tetanus vaccine, you usually do not need TIG. But you may need a booster dose (extra dose) of a tetanus vaccine after a wound.

If you have tetanus disease, you may get TIG as a treatment.

Talk to your healthcare provider before getting TIG if:

- You have an allergy to any part of the immune globulin.
- You had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after TIG or other immune globulins.
- You have low or no immunoglobulin A in your blood (IgA deficiency).

You can still get TIG if you have a mild illness such as a cold or fever.

How many doses do I need?

You need 1 dose of TIG as soon as possible after a wound that is at risk for tetanus. You also need at least 1 dose of tetanus vaccine. You may need more doses of tetanus vaccine if you have not completed your primary series.

How well does TIG work?

TIG provides fast protection and helps prevent tetanus disease.

Is TIG safe?

TIG is a safe blood product. Canadian Blood Services carefully screens donors and tests all blood. Blood is not used if the donor has risk factors or tests positive for an infectious disease. TIG is treated with heat and chemicals to kill germs. The risk of getting an infection from TIG is very small.

See reverse for more information.

Where can I get TIG?

If you have a wound that is at risk for tetanus, call Health Link at 811 as soon as possible.

If you need TIG, you will get it at your local public health or community health centre or hospital.

Are there side effects from TIG?

There can be side effects from TIG, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- feeling sore or feeling stiff where you had the needle
- a fever
- a rash
- feeling itchy

It is important to stay at the hospital or public health or community health centre for 15 minutes after you have TIG. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

How can I manage side effects?

- To help with soreness, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with a fever or pain. Check with your healthcare provider if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weakened immune system, must call their healthcare provider if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your healthcare provider even if you think the fever is from TIG.

What vaccines protect against tetanus?

You need to be immunized with a tetanus vaccine for long-term protection:

- **DTaP-IPV-Hib-HB** protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), and hepatitis B. As part of the routine immunization schedule, babies get this vaccine starting at age 2 months.
- **DTaP-IPV-Hib** protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, and Hib. As part of the routine immunization schedule, this vaccine is given to children who are age 18 months as a booster dose. Children may also get this vaccine if they are under age 2 years and are not getting the DTaP-IPV-Hib-HB

vaccine and children age 2 to 6 years who have not had all their doses of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, and Hib vaccines.

- **Tdap-IPV** protects against tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, and polio. As part of the routine immunization schedule, children get this vaccine as a booster dose if they are age 4 years and have already had their first 4 doses of a diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, and polio vaccine. Tdap-IPV used to be called dTap-IPV.
- **Tdap** protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. You can get it as a booster dose in Grade 9 and then every 10 years when you are an adult. This vaccine is also recommended every time you are pregnant. You may get this vaccine if you are not up to date with your tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis immunizations. Tdap used to be called dTap.

Can TIG affect any vaccines I have had?

TIG can interfere with live vaccines. You need to wait at least 3 months after getting TIG before you can get a live vaccine. If you had a live vaccine less than 14 days before having TIG, ask your healthcare provider or a public health nurse if you need the live vaccine again.

I have a fear of needles. How can I prepare for my immunization?

Many adults and children are afraid of needles. There are things you can do before, during, and after immunization to be more comfortable.



Scan the QR code, visit ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort, or call Health Link at 811 for information.

For more information about immunization



Call Health Link at **811**



Scan the QR code or go to ahs.ca/immunize