Tetanus - Diphtheria - Acellular Pertussis Vaccine (Tdap) for Adolescents
Adacel® or Boostrix®

If it has been 10 or more years since you were in kindergarten, then you’ve reached the age where you need a booster shot. This booster will protect you against three serious diseases: tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. Adacel® and Boostrix® are the two vaccines available that protect against these three diseases.

What is Tetanus?
It is a serious disease caused by a bacteria (germ) called Clostridium tetani. This germ is commonly found in dust and soil, and is not spread from person to person. If the tetanus germ gets into a cut, scratch, or a wound, it will make a toxin (poison) that can spread to your nerves and muscles. This toxin causes tightening of the muscles or will make the muscles lock in place, which is very painful. This muscle tightening can cause breathing problems and death. The muscles of the jaw are often the first ones to be affected and this is why tetanus is also called “lockjaw”. Even with early antibiotic treatment, death may still occur. People who survive tetanus may have long term problems with their speech, memory, and thinking. It is possible to get tetanus more than once, and the best way to protect yourself is by getting immunized every 10 years.

What is Diphtheria?
It is a serious disease caused by a bacteria (germ) that infects the nose, throat, or skin. It is spread from person to person through sneezes, coughs, and other close contact. The disease can cause serious breathing problems, heart failure, kidney failure, and nerve damage if you become infected. One out of every 10 people who get diphtheria will die from it. It is possible to get diphtheria more than once, and the best way to protect yourself is by getting a booster every 10 years.

What is Pertussis?
Pertussis is more commonly known as “whooping cough”. It is a serious disease caused by a bacteria (germ) called Bordetella pertussis. This bacteria is spread from person to person through coughing and other close contact. People become infected by breathing in the germ. “Whooping cough” causes severe coughing spells that can lead to vomiting (throwing up), brain damage, or death. The coughing spells can last for several weeks, even with treatment. Babies are more at risk of serious disease and may need hospital care. Teenagers and adults are often the ones who pass pertussis germs on to babies and young children. It is possible to get pertussis more than once, and the best way to protect yourself is by getting immunized with Adacel® or Boostrix® vaccine.
Who should get Adacel® or Boostrix®?

- Teenagers need a booster if it has been 10 years or more since their last immunization containing tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. This is typically between 14 and 16 years of age.
- Anyone who is 7 years of age or older and in need of a tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis booster.
- Adults 18 years of age and older who have not received Adacel® or Boostrix® as an adult, regardless of whether or not they received a pertussis containing vaccine as a teenager.
- Pregnant women may safely receive Adacel® or Boostrix® when indicated.

Who should NOT get Adacel® or Boostrix®?

Anyone with:

- A known anaphylactic reaction to any component of the vaccine.
- An allergic or serious reaction to a previous dose of any vaccine that has tetanus, diphtheria, or pertussis in it.
- An illness more serious than a cold, or with a fever, should wait until feeling well before getting Adacel® or Boostrix®.
- A previous history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome within six weeks after getting a vaccine with tetanus in it.
- A new or undiagnosed neurological illness should wait to get Adacel® or Boostrix® until the illness is being controlled or they are no longer ill.
- An illness, taking medications, or having treatments that weaken their immune system should delay getting Adacel® or Boostrix® until after the immunosuppression resolves.

What are the common side effects?
The most common reactions are redness, tenderness, and swelling where the shot was given. Other mild symptoms may include tiredness, headache, or general body aches. For those who experience symptoms, they usually go away after one or two days.

Allergic reactions are very rare after getting Adacel® or Boostrix®. Immediately contact your doctor or go to an emergency department if you develop hives, wheezing, trouble breathing, or swelling of the face or mouth. It is also important to contact your doctor if any other unusual signs or symptoms occur.

Questions?
For more information, please call Health Line at 519-271-7600 ext 267 or toll-free at 1-877-271-7348.