

Ministry of Health

Tdap Vaccine in Every Pregnancy: Qs & As for Immunizers

This question-and-answer sheet for health care professionals provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Q1. What change is being made to Ontario's publicly funded Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) immunization program?

Beginning April 1, 2022, Ontario expanded its publicly funded Tdap immunization program to include a routine dose in every pregnancy, for protection against pertussis (whooping cough). Up until now, Tdap vaccine has only been publicly funded in Ontario as a one-time dose in adolescence and a one-time dose in adulthood (to replace one dose of Td, recommended every 10 years).

Q2. Why has Ontario expanded the publicly funded Tdap immunization program to include a dose in every pregnancy?

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) reviewed the evidence on vaccination in pregnancy and recommends that all pregnant individuals should be offered Tdap vaccine in every pregnancy, regardless of previous Tdap immunization history, to help protect the baby against pertussis after birth.

Since the risk of severe pertussis infections and death occurs mostly in infants, Tdap vaccination during pregnancy is expected to greatly reduce this risk due to the transplacental transfer of maternal pertussis antibodies. This will provide direct protection of the infant against pertussis in the first months of life when the risk is highest and before the infant can start their pertussis immunization series.

Q3. When should the routine Tdap dose be received during pregnancy?

Tdap immunization should ideally be offered between 27 and 32 weeks of gestation, providing direct protection of the infant against pertussis in the first months of life when the risk of severe illness and death is highest, and before the baby can start their pertussis immunization series.

Earlier immunization between 13 and 26 weeks of gestation may also be considered in some situations (e.g., in case of an increased risk of preterm delivery or travel). While it is preferable that immunization is administered in sufficient time before birth (i.e., 4 weeks), it should be considered until the end of pregnancy, as it has the potential to provide partial protection.

If Tdap immunization is provided early in pregnancy (e.g., prior to recognition of pregnancy), it is not necessary to re-immunize after 13 weeks of gestation.

Q4. Is Tdap vaccination in every pregnancy safe? What if the pregnancies follow closely after one another?

The safety of receiving Tdap vaccine in pregnancy has been well-established and is recommended for every pregnancy regardless of any previous doses of Tdap received.

Q5. Where can pregnant individuals get the vaccine?

The Tdap vaccine is available from primary care providers who administer other routine vaccines. Some public health units may also offer the vaccine.

Q6. Do Tdap doses in pregnancy need to be documented or reported to the local medical officer of health or the Ministry of Health?

An individual who receives any vaccine should be given a record of their vaccination for their personal records.

There is currently no ministry requirement for reporting vaccinations for pregnant individuals, however if the person is considered a student under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA), their Tdap dose in adolescence may be necessary to meet the requirements under the ISPA, therefore the local medical officer of health would need to have a record of the dose.

Q7. What are other vaccines that are recommended for pregnant individuals?

Pregnant individuals should be vaccinated against whooping cough (pertussis), influenza and COVID-19.

Other vaccines may be indicated such as hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib), hepatitis A, meningococcal, pneumococcal, and polio. Refer to the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#) for information on immunization in pregnancy.

Q8. Where can I get more information?

For additional details:

- Tdap fact sheet (for public)
https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization/docs/tdap_fs_en.pdf
 - National Advisory Committee on Immunization; Update on immunization in pregnancy with Tdap vaccine [Update on immunization in pregnancy with Tdap vaccine - Canada.ca](#)
 - Ontario's Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario \(gov.on.ca\)](#)
 - Your local public health unit [Public Health Unit Locations - Public Health Units - Health Services in Your Community - MOHLTC \(gov.on.ca\)](#)
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