

Tetanus Immune Globulin

What is tetanus immune globulin?

Tetanus immune globulin (TIG) provides immediate, short-term protection against the bacteria that cause tetanus (lockjaw). TIG contains large amounts of antibodies taken from donated human blood. Antibodies are proteins that a person's immune system makes to fight germs, such as bacteria and viruses.

TIG is approved by Health Canada.

Is tetanus immune globulin safe?

Yes. TIG is prepared from donated human blood that is tested for safety. All blood donors are screened for exposure to viruses such as HIV and hepatitis. Each blood donation is also tested for the presence of blood-borne viruses before being used to make TIG. Many chemical and physical steps are included when preparing TIG. These steps include inactivating and removing viruses and bacteria that can cause disease. The final preparation of TIG undergoes more testing to ensure that there are no known infectious viruses present. However, there is an extremely small risk of passing some blood-borne infections through the use of TIG. Since blood screening and testing began, there have been no reports of blood-borne infections such as HIV, hepatitis B or hepatitis C in people who received TIG.

Who should get tetanus immune globulin?

Your health care provider may give you TIG if you have a wound and have had less than 3 doses of a tetanus vaccine or your immunization history is unknown. TIG is recommended for people with the following types of wounds:

- A dirty wound (e.g. contaminated with dirt, feces, soil or saliva)

- A puncture wound
- A trauma wound (burn, frostbite or crushing)

If you have a weakened immune system you may be given TIG even if you have received 3 or more doses of a tetanus vaccine.

You may also be given a tetanus vaccine when you get TIG to provide long-term protection against tetanus. For more information see [HealthLinkBC File #18a Tetanus and Diphtheria \(Td\) Vaccine](#).

What are the benefits of tetanus immune globulin?

TIG provides immediate, short-term protection against infection. It can prevent illness or make the illness less severe.

What are the possible reactions after tetanus immune globulin?

Common reactions to TIG may include fever and soreness where the immunization was given.

Some immune globulins may be associated with a risk of thrombosis (blood clots) within 24 hours of receiving them, especially when large volumes are given. The risk of thrombosis is increased in those:

- 45 years of age and older
- With a history of thrombosis
- With risk factors for thrombosis

Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen* (e.g. Advil®) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

*Ibuprofen should not be given to children under 6 months of age without first speaking to your health care provider.

For more information on Reye Syndrome, see [HealthLinkBC File #84 Reye Syndrome](#).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any immunization because there is a rare possibility, less than 1 in a million, of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. If this reaction occurs, your health care provider is prepared to treat it. Emergency treatment includes administration of epinephrine (adrenaline) and transfer by ambulance to the nearest emergency department. If symptoms develop after you leave the clinic, call **9-1-1** or the local emergency number.

Always report serious or unexpected reactions to your health care provider.

Who should not get tetanus immune globulin?

Speak with your health care provider if you have:

- Had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of any immune globulin or any part of tetanus immune globulin
- A condition called isolated immunoglobulin A deficiency
- A history of thrombosis or risk factors for thrombosis
- Been immunized against measles, mumps, rubella or chickenpox within the past 14 days

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness.

However, if you have concerns speak with your health care provider

What is tetanus?

Tetanus, also known as lockjaw, is caused by a bacteria mostly found in the soil. When the bacteria enter the skin through a cut, scrape or wound, they produce a poison that can cause painful tightening of muscles all over the body. It is very serious if the breathing muscles are affected. Other symptoms of tetanus may include headache, trouble swallowing, seizures, fever and sweating, high blood pressure and fast heart rate. Up to 1 in 5 people who get tetanus may die.

Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents or guardians and their children discuss consent for immunization. Children under the age of 19, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risk of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations. For more information on mature minor consent see [HealthLinkBC File #119 The Infants Act, Mature Minor Consent and Immunization](#).

For More Information

For more information on immunizations, visit ImmunizeBC at <https://immunizebc.ca/>.



ImmunizeBC



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/more/resources/healthlink-bc-files or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.