Get Up-to-Date With Tdap

Tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis counseling guide
What is pertussis (aka whooping cough)?

- **Pertussis** is a highly communicable respiratory disease that is transmitted from person to person through contact with respiratory droplets generated by coughing or sneezing.\(^1\)

- Patients are most infectious during the first stage of illness (catarrhal period) and the first 2 weeks after cough onset.\(^1\)

For adults, the impact of pertussis can be significant

A prospective, household contact study in a German community evaluated patients with pertussis (N = 257), 79 of whom were adult patients (19 to 83 years of age [mean: 36 years]). The adults had a particularly low rate of vaccination (4%) with 2 or more doses of whole cell pertussis vaccines when they were children.

Among the adult patients, 91% suffered from cough, which lasted an average of 54 days. Long-lasting cough (≥3 weeks up to 8 months) was observed in 80% of adults (mean: 61 days). Pertussis was serologically confirmed in 78 of the adult patients.

Adult patients were identified as the source of infection in 15% of 121 families in the community in the study and 68% of infected adults were parents, while 15% were either grandparents or great-grandparents of affected children.

Adults are often the first ones to have pertussis in a household with multiple pertussis cases and are often the source of infection for children.\(^1\)

For adults, full recovery from pertussis may take several months.\(^1\)
Signs and symptoms of pertussis

- Pertussis is often mistaken for a common cold\(^1\)

- Common symptoms include runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever, and a nonspecific cough that can gradually progress from mild to more severe\(^1\)

- In the second stage of illness (paroxysmal period), when coughing is most severe, paroxysmal attacks occur more frequently at night, with an average of 15 attacks per 24 hours\(^1\)

- This cough can last for up to 10 weeks, with less severe coughing persisting through recovery\(^1\)

Pertussis transmission to infants <12 months

- Many people, including family members who spread pertussis, may not know they have the disease\(^3\)

- In one study of infants who contracted pertussis, approximately 85% got it from a member of their immediate or extended family, when the source of the infection could be identified\(^4\)

- Infants <12 months of age are more likely to suffer from pertussis complications\(^1,5\)

- Complications in infants can include hospitalization, pneumonia, seizures, brain disorders, and, on very rare occasions, death\(^1\)
What is tetanus?

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states:

- **Tetanus** is an acute, often fatal, disease caused by an exotoxin produced by the bacterium *Clostridium tetani*.

- Tetanus is different from other vaccine-preventable diseases because it does not spread from person to person. The bacteria are usually found in soil, dust, and manure and enter the body through breaks in the skin—usually cuts or puncture wounds caused by contaminated objects.

- Tetanus is often called “lockjaw” because one of the most common signs of the infection is tightening of the jaw muscles. Tetanus infection can lead to serious health problems, including being unable to open the mouth and having trouble swallowing and breathing.

- Tetanus kills about 1 out of 10 people who are infected.

Tdap Immunization

- Being up-to-date with vaccinations is the best way to help prevent tetanus and pertussis.

- Tdap vaccine can help protect adults against both tetanus and pertussis.

- The ACIP recommends:
  - **Adolescents 11-18 years of age** who have not been previously vaccinated with Tdap should receive a single dose of Tdap.
  - **All adults 19 years of age and older** who have not received Tdap should receive a single dose.
  - **Pregnant women** should get one dose of Tdap each pregnancy, preferred at 27- to 36-weeks gestation.

- When identifying patients who may benefit from Tdap vaccination, consider the following groups:
  - **Patients requiring wound management.** Tdap is recommended over Td for wound management in patients 11 years of age and older who have not previously received Tdap.
  - **Anyone having close contact with a baby** 12 months-of-age and younger who has not already received Tdap (e.g., parents, siblings, grandparents, relatives, child-care providers).
  - **Healthcare professionals** who have not already received Tdap.

- According to the National Health Interview Survey, 26.6% of adults 19 years of age and older received Tdap vaccine in 2016.
You can help make a difference

Increase Tdap vaccination rates among your adolescent and adult patients

**Identify:**
Proactively identify appropriate patients who could benefit from a Tdap vaccination

**Educate:**
Deliver an effective presentation on the rationale and importance of vaccination

**Vaccinate:**
Offer a Tdap vaccination to all appropriate patients
References