



June 15, 2011

To: Douglas County Health Care Providers and Clinics  
 From: Douglas County Health Department

**Recommendations for Use of Tetanus Vaccine during Floods**  
*Information for Health-Care Providers*

The following information provides guidance for use of tetanus diphtheria (Td) and Tetanus diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine during flood conditions based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC).

There is usually no increased risk of getting vaccine-preventable diseases, such as tetanus and hepatitis A, during a flood. However, those assisting in cleanup efforts may be wounded and exposed to soil that contains the bacteria that causes tetanus.

Available evidence indicates that complete primary vaccination with tetanus toxoid provides long-lasting protection among most recipients. Consequently, after complete primary tetanus vaccination, booster doses are recommended at 10-year intervals. Tdap vaccine is recommended for adolescents and adults to replace a single dose of Td as a booster immunization against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough).

Management of flood-associated wounds, e.g., puncture wound or a wound contaminated with feces, soil or saliva, should include appropriate evaluation of tetanus immunity (and immunization if indicated) as at any other time.

- For clean and minor wounds occurring during the 10-year interval, no additional booster is recommended.
- For other wounds, a booster is appropriate if the patient has not received tetanus toxoid within the preceding five years.
- See the table below for guidance in managing patients who have not completed the primary Td vaccination.

**TABLE 14. Guide to tetanus prophylaxis in routine wound management among adults aged 19–64 years**

Characteristic	Clean, minor wound		All other wounds*	
	Tdap or Td†	TIG	Tdap or Td†	TIG
History of adsorbed tetanus toxoid (doses)				
Unknown or <3	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
≥3	No§	No	No¶	No

\* Such as, but not limited to, wounds contaminated with dirt, feces, soil, and saliva; puncture wounds; avulsions; and wounds resulting from missiles, crushing, burns, and frostbite.

† Tdap is preferred to Td for adults who have never received Tdap. Td is preferred to TT for adults who received Tdap previously or when Tdap is not available. If TT and TIG are both used, Tetanus Toxoid Adsorbed rather than tetanus toxoid for booster use only (fluid vaccine) should be used.

§ Yes, if ≥10 years since the last tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine dose.

¶ Yes, if ≥5 years since the last tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine dose.

Table taken from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Preventing Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis Among Adults: Use of Tetanus Toxoid, Reduced Diphtheria Toxoid and Acellular Pertussis Vaccine. MMWR 2006;55(No. RR-17): p.25.

See the CDC’s Flood page for more information about health and safety during floods:  
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/>.

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