

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, during a flood. However, those assisting in clean up 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 (i.e., 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 tetanus booster is recommended.
- For other wounds, a booster is appropriate if the patient has not received a tetanus-containing vaccine within the preceding five years.
- See the table below for guidance in managing patients who have not completed the primary series for tetanus.

Guide to Tetanus Prophylaxis in Routine Wound Management

Dose History	Clean, minor wounds		All other wounds*	
	Td/ Tdap§	TIG†	Td/ Tdap§	TIG
Uncertain or <3	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
>3	No, if < 10 years since last dose	No	No, if < 5 years since last dose	No
	Yes, if ≥ 10 years since last dose	No	Yes, if ≥ 5 years since last dose	No

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

§For children < 7 years old, DTaP (DT, if pertussis vaccine is contraindicated) is recommended. For persons ≥ 7 years old, Tdap is preferred to Td for people who have not previously received Tdap. There is not a minimal interval between Tdap and the most recent dose of Td.

†TIG= Tetanus immune globulin.

Health care providers should review the patient’s vaccination history in the North Dakota Immunization Information System (NDIIS) prior to vaccine administration.