



HEALTH ADVISORY

#122

Tetanus Vaccine Needed

TO: **West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and Other Healthcare Facilities**

FROM: **Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP, Commissioner and State Health Officer
Bureau for Public Health, WV Department of Health & Human Resources**

DATE: **06-25-2016**

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR), Bureau for Public Health (BPH) is working through Health Incident Command to support flood-impacted counties with significant clean-up efforts underway across the state. The WVDHHR, BPH is requesting any county health department that has a supply of Tdap to check their supplies and make doses of Tdap available this weekend until an order of additional vaccine can be delivered on Tuesday, June 28, 2016. If county health departments have any doses they can release this weekend, please call (304) 558-6900, extension 71446. These doses will be replaced this coming week.

During clean-up efforts the risk of wounds may be increased. Adults need a Tdap booster every 10 years. "Tetanus is a disease contracted by getting the tetanus bacteria into an open cut or wound," said Dr. Rahul Gupta, State Health Officer and Commissioner for the Bureau for Public Health. "Although tetanus is rare, it can be very serious or even fatal."

Tetanus is preventable by making sure a person is up to date on their tetanus immunization. This is done by getting a tetanus booster every 10 years. Tetanus booster vaccine is now typically combined with diphtheria and pertussis vaccines known as "Tdap" to provide protection against all three diseases. Unless previously vaccinated with the same, Tdap is the recommended vaccine for persons 7 years of age and older. Td (tetanus and diphtheria) is recommended for booster doses for persons 7 years and older who have previously received a dose of Tdap. For persons with a wound that has been exposed to flood water, the recommended interval between doses of tetanus-containing vaccine should be shortened from 10 years to 5 years.

It is vitally important for medical providers to thoroughly screen persons when evaluating their need for tetanus-containing vaccine. First aid, even for minor cuts and burns, is very important during flood cleanup. Immediately clean all wounds and cuts with soap and clean water.

In addition to immunization, it is important to remind your patients that open wounds and rashes exposed to flood waters can become infected. They need to:

- Avoid exposure to flood waters if they have an open wound.
- Cover open wounds with a waterproof bandage.
- Keep open wounds as clean as possible by washing thoroughly with soap and clean water.
- If a wound develops redness, swelling, or drainage, seek immediate medical attention.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information as appropriate to the target audience.

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