

News Release

June 16, 2025

For Immediate Release

Contact: Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223

Tdap and DTaP: 3 for 1 Protection

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages residents to know if they are up to date on their vaccinations with Tdap or DTaP. These two vaccines are offered at different ages, and both offer protection from 3 diseases in one shot.

The letter "T" in Tdap and DTaP shows they help protect against **tetanus**. The letter "D" shows they protect against **diphtheria**. The letter "P" shows they also help protect against whooping cough (the medical name is **pertussis**).

All three of these illnesses are preventable with vaccines. Before vaccines, these diseases were common and caused millions of illnesses and deaths each year. Now there are only pockets of these diseases left around the world, with occasional outbreaks occurring in the United States.

- Tetanus is rare but happens sporadically in the US, with less than 50 cases per year.
- Diphtheria is eliminated in the US; since 1997 there have only been a handful of cases, all related to travel to other countries.
- Pertussis is less common than before but tends to have outbreaks every 3 to 4 years. Last year in Nebraska there were 419 cases, compared to 13 cases the year before.

Getting recommended vaccinations on time is an important step in keeping these diseases at bay. DTaP is given to children aged 6 weeks to 7 years. Tdap is given to pre-teens prior to starting 7th grade, or to adults who need updates. Pregnant women get the Tdap vaccine during each pregnancy to help protect their newborn until they can be vaccinated for pertussis starting at 2 months of age. Children under 3 months old are most at risk for severe disease or death from whooping cough.

"These vaccines are required for children starting Kindergarten and 7th grade," explains Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager at SWNPHD. "This summer is the perfect opportunity get your child or yourself up to date while things are less busy at our local clinics."

If you are unsure about whether you or your child are up to date on your Tdap and DTaP vaccines, talk to your healthcare provider or contact the public health nurse at SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. You can also look up your shot records in the Nebraska State Immunization Information System (NESIIS) at nesiis-dhhs-prod.ne.gov. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov.

###