

On-time immunisation is the most important way to prevent pertussis in infants and children.

Please familiarise yourself with the pertussis information outlined in Chapter 14 in the Immunisation Handbook 2014, and refer to your local District Health Board (DHB) recommendations.

Why offer pertussis immunisation to adults?

The goal of the current national pertussis immunisation schedule is to protect those most vulnerable to severe disease, i.e. infants during the first year of life.

Infants can be protected directly by immunisation in early infancy and also indirectly by immunisation of others with whom the infant may come into contact, i.e. by immunising during pregnancy and 'cocooning' the infant.

What vaccine do we offer adults wanting pertussis immunisation?

FUNDED Boostrix® is recommended for pregnant women between 28–38 weeks of every pregnancy, and people with a medical condition specified on the Pharmaceutical Schedule, i.e. individuals post-haematopoietic stem cell transplantation; post-chemotherapy; pre- or post-splenectomy; pre- or post-solid organ transplantation; on renal dialysis or a severely immunosuppressive regimen.

All other adults (those aged 18 years or older) can be offered a booster immunisation using either Boostrix® or Adacel®. They are NOT FUNDED* and must be ordered on the HCL Non-Funded Vaccine Order Form. They are also non-schedule vaccines and must be prescribed by a doctor.

Can we use Boostrix® stock from the fridge?

The funded Boostrix® from ProPharma can only be used for the 11 year old Schedule immunisation, catch-up immunisation for children aged 7 years to under 18 years; women who are pregnant between 28–38 weeks gestation in every pregnancy, and individuals post-haematopoietic stem cell transplantation; post-chemotherapy; pre- or post-splenectomy; pre- or post-solid organ transplantation; on renal dialysis or a severely immunosuppressive regimen.

Can we claim an administration fee for giving Tdap immunisation to an ineligible adult?

No. You cannot claim an administration fee for an adult non-funded vaccination. You will need to incorporate your vaccine administration fee into the amount being charged to the patient.

Is there a pertussis only vaccine for adults?

No. Pertussis only comes in combination with diphtheria and tetanus, i.e. Tdap.

What if the person has recently had Td?

There is no minimum interval between a previous Td (ADT™ Booster) immunisation and a subsequent Tdap immunisation.*

*Except when Tdap is replacing a dose of Td in a primary immunisation course against tetanus and diphtheria.

How many doses of Tdap do we give adults to boost pertussis protection?

One dose is expected to boost existing pertussis immunity in most adults. A booster dose can be given at 10 yearly intervals for people working with infants, e.g. healthcare professionals and early childhood centre staff.

Can we give Tdap to a woman who is pregnant?

Yes. Tdap is recommended and funded for pregnant women between 28–38 weeks gestation in every pregnancy regardless of the time interval since the previous dose.

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Can we give Tdap to a woman who is pregnant? ...continued

Administration of Tdap during the third trimester maximises circulating maternal antibodies and antibody transfer across the placenta to the fetus. Circulating maternal antibodies in the newborn are likely to protect them from severe pertussis for up to six weeks after birth. Tdap is also expected to protect the mother from disease, indirectly protecting the infant whilst they are most vulnerable.

Can we give Tdap to a woman who is breastfeeding?

Yes. Tdap is safe for the breastfeeding woman and her baby.

Can Tdap be given after exposure to pertussis to prevent the person contracting the disease?

No. Tdap will not prevent disease if there has been recent exposure. Certain antibiotics can be used to reduce the effect of pertussis or to reduce the risk of spread of the disease if commenced early in the illness.

What if the adult had pertussis disease or pertussis immunisations as a child?

Neither pertussis disease nor immunisation provides lifelong immunity. A pertussis immunisation is expected to boost immunity in these people.

What about children and adolescents who are behind with their immunisations?

It is important that children, particularly siblings of young babies, are up to date with their immunisations.

Please refer to the age-appropriate catch-up guide in Appendix 2 of the Immunisation Handbook 2014 when planning a catch-up schedule.

Either Infanrix®-hexa (DTaP-IPV-HepB/Hib) or Infanrix®-IPV (DTaP-IPV) can be used for children less than 10 years of age. Boostrix® (Tdap) can be used for children aged 7 years to under 18 years.#

Vaccine choice will be determined by the antigens required and parental consent.

Boostrix® is not approved for use in a primary course.

However, no safety concerns are expected with off-label use.

References

- Elliott E, McIntyre P, Ridley G, Morris A, Massie J, McEniery J, et al. National study of infants hospitalized with pertussis in the acellular vaccine era. *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*. 2004;23(3):246-52.
- Grant CC, Roberts M, Scragg R, Stewart J, Lennon D, Kivell D, et al. Delayed immunisation and risk of pertussis in infants: unmatched case-control study. *BMJ*. 2003;326(7394):852.
- Ministry of Health. Immunisation Handbook 2014. Wellington: Ministry of Health; 2014.
- Pharmaceutical Management Agency (PHARMAC). New Zealand Pharmaceutical Schedule [Internet]. Wellington: Pharmaceutical Management Agency; June 2016. Available from: <http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/2016/06/01/Schedule.pdf>.