

Diphtheria is a serious communicable bacterial disease that causes severe inflammation of the nose, throat and windpipe (trachea). It is caused by the bacterium *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*. The bacteria produce toxins that cause an abnormal membrane to grow in the throat, which can lead to suffocation. Other dangerous complications include paralysis and heart failure if the toxins spread throughout the body. Around 10 per cent of people exposed to diphtheria die from the disease.

Tetanus is a serious bacterial disease that causes muscle spasms and breathing problems. The bacterium that causes tetanus is called *Clostridium tetani*. The bacteria produce toxins that affect the nervous system. Around one in 10 people infected with the bacterium that causes tetanus will die.

Whooping cough (pertussis) is a serious, contagious, respiratory infection caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. The disease begins like a cold and then the characteristic cough develops. This cough may last up to three months, even after antibiotic treatment is completed and the person is no longer infectious. The 'whoop' (which is not always obvious) is due to a deep breath at the end of a bout of coughing. Vomiting after coughing is common. Whooping cough is particularly dangerous for babies less than six months of age. They are affected more seriously by the disease than older children or adults, and are more likely to develop complications. One in every 200 babies who contract whooping cough will die. Immunisation is the best way to reduce the risk of whooping cough.

Students must provide evidence of a dose of dTpa vaccine (either a Boostrix or Adacel Brand) within the last 10 years (date, brand and batch number).

What is the Vaccine Schedule?

- One dose of either a Boostrix or Adacel brand every 10 years.

How do I find my evidence for Vaccines?

You can provide several forms of evidence:

- A copy of your Baby/Immunisation Booklet outlining the dates of vaccines
- Letter from GP outlining dates of vaccines
- Document from the [Australian Childhood Immunisation Register](#) (ACIR) or the Vaccination Information and Vaccination Administration System (VIVAS) database.

Contact details for ACIR and VIVAS is on the [Fit for Professional Practice](#) website.

For more information contact the Fit for Professional Practice Office on: 07 5552 9480 or
fitforprofessionalpractice@griffith.edu.au

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