



Adult Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis Vaccine dTpa (Boostrix™) Year 7 Primary School Students February 2005

What is Adult Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis Vaccine (dTpa, Boostrix™)?

dTpa (Boostrix™) is a new vaccine for persons 8 years of age or older that is designed to boost their immunity to diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough). It has lower doses of diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis antigens than the childhood diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTPa) vaccines Infanrix™ and Tripacel™, to reduce side effects such as inflammatory reactions at the injection site.

Why is Boostrix™ recommended for Year 7 primary school students?

From 2004, Boostrix™ has replaced dT (ADT™) as a scheduled vaccine for Year 7 primary school students in Western Australia, in order to boost their immunity against pertussis. Pertussis immunisation lasts about 6 to 10 years, so children or adults who haven't had a pertussis vaccination for more than 6 years may be susceptible to pertussis infection. A pertussis booster vaccination is recommended for all children at 4 years of age, prior to school entry, and, since most diagnosed pertussis cases currently occur in children 10 to 14 years of age, another pertussis booster vaccination in Year 7 primary school is expected to help prevent outbreaks of pertussis among secondary school students and their close contacts (especially their families). From 2004, Boostrix™ is free for Year 7 primary school students.

Why is Boostrix™ not recommended for other primary school students?

Firstly, Boostrix™ is not recommended for persons less than 8 years of age. Secondly, primary school students who are fully immunised against pertussis (i.e. were vaccinated at 2, 4, 6 months and 4 years of age) do not require a pertussis booster vaccination for at least 6 years after their last pertussis booster vaccination (i.e. 11 years of age).

Is dTpa (Boostrix™) recommended for other persons?

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommends a single dTpa (Boostrix™) vaccination:

- Before planning pregnancy, or for both parents as soon as possible after delivery of an infant, (preferably prior to hospital discharge).
- For adults working with young children. dTpa (Boostrix™) vaccination is especially recommended for health-care workers and child-care workers in contact with the youngest infants, such as maternity and nursery staff.
- Any adult expressing an interest in receiving a booster dose of dTpa should be encouraged to do so provided that a primary course of DTP vaccine has been given in the past. With this same provision, dTpa (Boostrix™) may be used instead of dT (ADT™) vaccine at 50 years of age.

For whom is Boostrix "free"?

Boostrix™ vaccine is only free for:

- Year 7 primary school students from 2004 onwards, and
- Secondary school students who were in Year 8 to Year 12 in 2004 only (and for persons who have left school and who would have been in Year 8 to Year 12 in 2004 if they'd stayed in school).

Boostrix™ must be prescribed by a doctor for all other persons. Visit www.health.wa.gov.au/whoopingcough for more information.

Can a person have a Boostrix™ if they've had a dT (ADT™) or diphtheria or tetanus vaccination in the previous 5 years?

Yes. There is no contraindication to Boostrix™ vaccination less than 5 years after a dT (ADT™) or diphtheria or tetanus vaccination, especially if pertussis booster vaccination is indicated. In such cases, inflammatory reactions at the injection site may be increased, but not necessarily.

Can a person have a Boostrix™ if they've had whooping cough?

Yes. There is no contraindication to Boostrix™ vaccination after whooping cough. In general, whooping cough vaccination is more effective than whooping cough infection at stimulating long-term immunity to whooping cough and there is no evidence that whooping cough vaccination is more harmful in persons who have had whooping cough infection. Thus, Boostrix™ vaccination is recommended for persons who have had whooping cough before. Persons who have had whooping cough and do not wish to have Boostrix™ vaccination should inquire whether they need a dT (ADT™) vaccination instead.

Should my child have a Boostrix™ before an important event (e.g. exam)?

Most side effects from Boostrix™ vaccination (see below) last less than 48 hours, but if you are concerned that your child's performance (e.g. for an exam or sporting event) could be affected by Boostrix™ side effects, then you should delay the Boostrix™ vaccination until after the event.

What are the side effects of Boostrix™?

Common side effects following Boostrix™ vaccination include pain, redness and swelling at the injection site and feeling unwell. Less common side effects include fever, headache, and tiredness. Most side effects last less than 48 hours.

What are the contraindications for Boostrix™?

There are 3 contraindications to pertussis-containing vaccines:

1. Encephalopathy (disorder of the brain).
2. Immediate severe allergic reaction following a previous dose of a pertussis-containing vaccine.
3. Known hypersensitivity to any component of the vaccine.

Where can I get more information about Boostrix™ or pertussis?

- The Australian Immunisation Handbook, 8th Edition, 2003: www1.health.gov.au/immhandbook/
- Boostrix™ Consumer Information (GlaxoSmithKline): www.gsk.com.au or (FreeCall) 1800 002 512
- The Western Australian Department of Health: www.health.wa.gov.au/whoopingcough