

January 20, 2023

Occupational Health Staff Responsible for Healthcare Students
Educational Institutions

RE: Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis) Recommendation

As we continue seeing students in our clinic who are required by your institution to receive a Tdap vaccination, we would like to share with you our preliminary recommendation regarding Tdap for your consideration and to provide public health perspective to inform your internal policy decisions.

Currently, Tdap is funded by the Ontario government as a single one-time dose over the age of 18. Unfortunately, existing research demonstrates that the pertussis component of the Tdap vaccine does not confer life-long immunity to pertussis, also known as whooping cough. Instead, the effectiveness of the vaccine appears to wane after approximately 2 years.

Our preliminary recommendation of Tdap vaccination is not to vaccinate immediately at age 18 if that individual received Tdap within the past two years. We have contacted national advisory groups to clarify this issue further. In the meantime, our recommendation to students training in healthcare is as follows:

- If the student is not yet entering clinical work this year and is not around vulnerable populations (e.g., pregnant women and infants), Tdap should be postponed until this work is due to begin in the near future, in order to maximize protection of at-risk individuals.
- If the student is entering clinical work shortly with vulnerable populations but has received a Tdap before age 18 and within the last two years, then the adult dose of Tdap should be postponed until at least 2 years after previous Tdap in order to maximize that individual's period of immunity.

We recognize this adds an additional layer of complexity to tracking vaccination status and thank you for your understanding with this issue. Our aim is to keep the burden of illness lowest in those at risk, and we believe that strategic immunization of young adults will help.

Yours sincerely,



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