

## WHAT ABOUT THE VACCINES AND THEIR BENEFITS?

The vaccines to protect children younger than 7 years old against all 3 diseases are usually given together as one shot. This is called the **DTP** vaccine (**D**iphtheria, **T**etanus, and **P**ertussis). Most children should get 5 DTP shots before they go to school. Most babies should get 3 DTP shots by 6 months of age.

Three or more DTP shots keep:

- 70 to 90 children out of 100 from getting **pertussis** if exposed to it, and usually protect the child through the elementary school years. The others who have had the DTP vaccine but get pertussis usually have a milder illness than if they had not had the vaccine.
- At least 85 children out of 100 from getting **diphtheria** for at least 10 years.
- At least 95 children out of 100 from getting **tetanus** for at least 10 years.

Pertussis vaccine should not be given to a few children. Other vaccines are available for these children and for adults:

- **DT** vaccine (Diphtheria and Tetanus) is given to children under age 7 years who should not receive pertussis vaccine.
- **Td** vaccine (Tetanus and diphtheria) is specially made for children age 7 years and older and for adults.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THESE VACCINES?

### DTP

Most children have little or no problem from the DTP shot. Many children will have fever or soreness, swelling, and redness where the shot was given. Usually these problems are mild and last 1 to 2 days. Some children will be cranky, drowsy, or not want to eat during this time.

Less often—that is, following 1 DTP shot in 100 to 1 shot in 1,000—a more serious problem can happen:

- Crying without stopping for 3 hours or longer
- A temperature of 105°F or higher
- An unusual, high-pitched cry

Even less often—following 1 DTP shot in 1,750—a child may have:

- A **convulsion** (seizures, fits, spasms, twitching, jerking, or staring spells), usually from high fever that may happen after the shot
- Shock-collapse (become blue or pale, limp, and not responsive)

Rarely, brain damage that lasts for the child's life has been reported after getting DTP. However, most experts now agree that DTP has not been shown to be a cause of brain damage. If DTP ever causes brain damage, then such an event would be **very** rare. There is no test that can tell in advance if your child will have any of these problems following DTP vaccination.

### DT, Td, and T

DT, Td, and T vaccines cause few problems. They may cause mild fever or soreness, swelling, and redness where the shot was given. These problems usually last for 1 to 2 days, but this does not happen nearly as often as with DTP vaccine. Sometimes, adults who get these vaccines too often can have a lot of soreness and swelling where the shot was given.

There is a rare chance that other serious problems or even death could occur after getting DTP, Pertussis, DT, T, or Td. Such problems could happen after taking any medicine or after receiving any vaccine.