



November 24, 2015

Dear Colleague:

**Re: New Tdap Immunization Recommendations during Pregnancy  
Ministry of Health Directives**

Pertussis outbreaks continue to occur in Canada with infants at highest risk of severe illness, including hospitalization and death. Immunization with Tdap vaccine has been shown to be safe for pregnant women. This will result in the transfer of pertussis antibodies to the fetus and, additionally, prevent mothers from passing the infection to their newborns after delivery.

**Recommendation 1:**

- Pregnant women who have not received an adult dose of Tdap (at  $\geq 18$  years old) should be immunized at or after 26 weeks gestation to ensure the transfer of maternal antibodies and optimal neonatal protection during an infant's first two months of life.
- If Tdap is administered before 26 weeks gestation, it should not be repeated after 26 weeks or post-delivery.

**Recommendation 2:**

- In a pertussis outbreak situation, pregnant women who are 26 weeks gestation or greater should be offered Tdap vaccination based on recommendations from the Regional Medical Health Officer.
- This Tdap dose should be given regardless of whether or when a pregnant women has received Tdap in the past (e.g., as their adolescent dose; as their adult booster; as a healthcare worker; as a previous post-partum cocooning dose; or a dose during previous pregnancy).

**Refer to the Tdap Immunization Decision Chart for Pregnant Women on the next page.**

You and your staff should be prepared to answer patients' questions about Tdap accurately. Studies confirm that your recommendation and promotion of vaccines are essential.

Here are some facts you should know:

- A pregnant women may be more likely to accept Tdap if it is recommended by her healthcare provider as being beneficial for her baby.
- If Tdap is administered to a pregnant woman before 26 weeks gestation, it should not be repeated after 26 weeks gestation or post-delivery.
- Women, who previously received Tdap anytime as an adult or during their current pregnancy, do not require Tdap post-delivery.
- All other (non-pregnant) adults currently remain eligible for only one adult Tdap booster, either as a replacement for Td or as part of the infant cocooning strategy.

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- Patients should encourage their spouses, relatives, and any other adolescents or adults who will spend time with the baby to get Tdap. This creates a cocoon of protection around the baby – a safeguard in addition to the mother's antibodies.
- A caregiver qualifies for a cocooning dose if:
  - Caring for an infant under 6 months of age
  - They are over the age of 18 years of age and have yet to receive their one adult dose of Tdap.

Population and Public Health (PPH) would like to thank those of you who have participated in our annual Influenza campaigns in the past. This has been a successful model to provide opportunistic preventative immunization to SHR patients. Last year alone, immunizations provided by Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners accounted for approximately a quarter of the influenza vaccine administered to our population (25,291 of the 103,503 doses delivered).

PPH firmly believes that Family physicians, Obstetricians, Nurse Practitioners, and Midwives are well positioned as primary health providers to offer Tdap to patients over 26 weeks who have not received a dose since the age of 18 years of age.

If your practice is currently offering immunization services, or you wish to be provided with further information regarding vaccine storage and handling, ordering, and cold chain, please contact: Melonye Hynd at [melonye.hynd@saskatoonhealthregion.ca](mailto:melonye.hynd@saskatoonhealthregion.ca).

In the interim, you may wish to print the attachment for your patients requiring a Tdap booster.

Thank you for your dedication to ensure the health and safety of pregnant women and their infants.

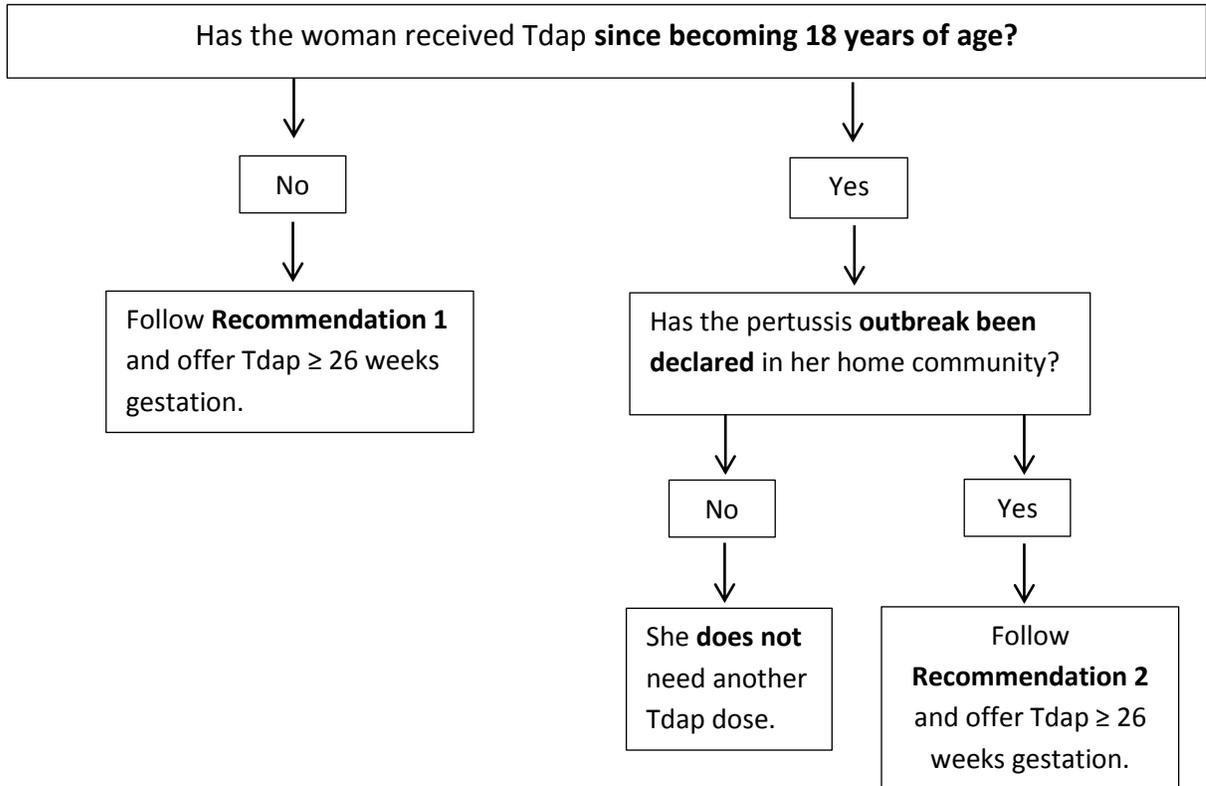
Sincerely,

*Original signed*

Dr. Simon Kapaj  
MD MPH  
Deputy Medical Health Officer

Attachment

## Tdap Immunization Decision Chart for Pregnant Women:



# Parents Can Protect Their Babies from Pertussis

You can receive a *Free* Tdap vaccine  
(Tetanus, Diphtheria, acellular Pertussis)  
from the following sources:

- Visit the Population and Public Health website at:

[www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/locations\\_services/services/Immunization](http://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/locations_services/services/Immunization) for information on:

- Drop-in clinic options on Thursdays or Saturdays
  - Booked appointments at International Travel Centre at 306-655-4780.
- Or check with:
    - Your family doctor
    - Your OB/GYN



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