

DIPHTHERIA



The data

Since vaccination the number of Diphtheria cases has dropped from **23,269** in 2019 to **722** in 2021.



The disease

Caused by the bacterium *Corynebacterium diphtheria*, which mainly infects the **THROAT** and **UPPER AIRWAYS**, and produces a toxin that affects other organs.



Transmission

- > It is transmitted through direct physical contact or by **DROPLETS** from coughing or sneezing of infected persons or through **CONTAMINATED TISSUES** or **OBJECTS**.



Symptoms

- > The disease has an **ACUTE ONSET** with sore throat, low-grade fever and swollen glands in the neck, and the toxin may, in severe cases, cause myocarditis or peripheral neuropathy.
- > The toxin causes a membrane of dead tissue to accumulate over the **THROAT** and **AMYGDALS**, making breathing and swallowing more difficult.
- > Diphtheria is **DEADLY IN 5 - 10%** of cases, with a higher mortality rate in **YOUNG CHILDREN**.



Vaccines

- > **6 DOSES** are recommended (3 primary doses, followed by 3 booster doses).
- > The primary series should begin at **6 WEEKS OF AGE** with subsequent doses given at a minimum interval of 4 weeks between doses.
- > For booster doses there should be at least 4 years between doses: at two years, at 4 to 7 years, and at 9 to 15 years.



Calendar

- > Diphtheria vaccination is normally administered with the **DTP VACCINE** (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis).
- > In addition, it is also administered in combination with tetanus, pertussis and Hib (quadrivalent); combined with tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B and Hib (pentavalent); combined with tetanus, acellular pertussis, inactivated polio and Hib (pentavalent); combined with tetanus, acellular pertussis, inactivated polio and Hib (pentavalent) and combined vaccine with tetanus, acellular pertussis, hepatitis B, inactivated polio and Hib (hexavalent).
- > For adolescents and adults, diphtheria toxoid is often combined with tetanus toxoid in a lower concentration (Td vaccine).
- > The combined diphtheria and tetanus toxoid vaccine (Td or TD) can be used in pregnancy.