



MEDIA RELEASE

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST TETANUS

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With the arrival of warmer weather, many Canadians will be spending time outdoors to play, garden, or start home renovations – but some could be placing themselves at risk of the vaccine-preventable disease, tetanus, if they are not up to date with their immunizations.

Tetanus is an acute and often fatal disease caused by a toxin released by bacteria present in our environment. Most individuals associate tetanus infection with rusty nails. While this may be true, tetanus infection can also occur from a minor scrape or puncture while gardening, or renovating, or even an animal bite. The bacteria that cause the disease tend to live in dirt, dust and soil and can enter the body through breaks in the skin or wounds caused by contaminated objects. The toxin that is released by the bacteria blocks normal control of nerve reflexes in the spinal column, resulting in painful muscle spasms that can affect the ability to breathe.

Immunize Canada reminds Canadians about the importance of being up to date on their tetanus booster. “The *Canadian Immunization Guide* recommends that all Canadians receive a tetanus booster every ten years,” says Dr. Susan Bowles, Chair of Immunize Canada. “The tetanus booster is safe and effective, and free for all Canadians, so there is no reason why anyone should be unprotected,” states Dr. Bowles.

“At the same time, it is important for Canadians to be proactive about their health,” says Dr. Shelly McNeil, Vice-Chair of Immunize Canada. “Now is the perfect time for Canadians to talk to their doctor, nurse, pharmacist or local public health office about being up to date on their tetanus immunization.”

About Immunize Canada

Immunize Canada is a national coalition of non-governmental, professional health, and government organizations with the overall aim of increasing awareness about the benefits of immunization and promoting the understanding and use of vaccines as recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

For more information about tetanus immunization, please contact your local public health office, visit Immunize Canada at immunize.ca, or contact:

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