

DIPHTHERIA-PHARYNGEAL
(Reportable Disease – Report to Local Health Agency)

- IMMUNIZATION:** Part of standard childhood immunization schedule. Booster doses (Td) are recommended every 10 years.
- INCUBATION PERIOD:** Usually 2 to 5 days, occasionally longer
- SYMPTOMS:** Fever, sore throat, grayish white patches on tonsils or palate. May have nasal discharge, fatigue, headache, and swollen lymph nodes.
- PERIOD OF COMMUNICABILITY:** Variable. If untreated usually 2 weeks or less, seldom more than 4 weeks. Effective antibiotic therapy can limit communicability to 4 days. Elimination of organism should be documented by two consecutive negative cultures after completion of therapy.
- MODE OF TRANSMISSION:** Primarily from intimate/close contact with discharges from nose, throat, and eye of carrier or infected person. Rarely from contact with articles soiled from discharges of infected person.
- SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:** Exclude until two consecutive negative cultures of the nose and of the throat, with second set of cultures taken not less than 24 hours apart, are secured following effective antibiotic therapy.
- CONTACTS/FOLLOW-UP:**
- Adult contacts whose occupations involve handling food, especially milk, or close association with nonimmunized children, should be excluded from that work until bacteriologic examination proves them not to be carriers.
 - All close contacts should have cultures taken and should be kept under surveillance for 7 days. A single dose of penicillin (IM) or a 7-10 day course of erythromycin (PO) is recommended for all persons exposed to diphtheria, regardless of their immunization status. If cultures are positive, they should be treated with antibiotics, and those who handle food or work with school children should be excluded from work or school until bacteriologic examination proves them not to be carriers.
 - Previously immunized contacts should receive a booster dose of diphtheria toxoid, and a primary series should be initiated in nonimmunized contacts, using Td, DT, DTP or DTP-Hib vaccine depending on age.