

Diphtheria vaccine

Diphtheria causes a thick covering in the back of the throat. The germ secretes a toxin that can lead to breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure, and even death. Although typically thought of as a disease of our grandparents' generation, countries that have cut back on this vaccine have experienced resurgence of the disease.

This vaccine is given as part of a combination vaccine with the vaccines against tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough). One formulation (DTaP) is designed for children from 6 weeks to 7 years of age. The other (Tdap) is designed for children and adults age 11 years or older.