

FACTS ABOUT TETANUS DISEASE

is reported to the Ministry of Health and using this information 38 high risk districts have identified and are targeted for the Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus campaign.

Three rounds (September and October 2013 and April 2014) of vaccinations will be carried out in the following 38 districts

Bahari, Kaloleni, Malindi, Ganze, Kilindini, Meru Central, Tigania, Chalbi, Laisamis, Mandera West, Mandera East, Wajir North, Wajir West, Wajir South, Lagdera, Fafi, Ijara, Kwanza, Baringo, Koibatek, Baringo North, East Pokot, Eldoret East, Wareng, Pokot North, Pokot Central, Turkana North, Turkana South, Turkana Central, Samburu East, Samburu Central, Kajiado North, Kajiado Central, Loitokitok, Laikipia North, Laikipia West, Narok North, Narok South.

Why Does this Campaign Only Target Girls and Women?

Maternal and neonatal tetanus are common fatal consequences of unclean deliveries and umbilical cord care practices. Vaccinating women protects them and their babies from tetanus. When mothers are vaccinated they pass on this immunity to their babies and thus protect the babies from tetanus.

Myths on Tetanus

- **Myth** -Tetanus is a mild disease;
Fact - Tetanus is a fatal disease which results in death if not timely and appropriately managed.
- **Myth** - Tetanus is caused by curses, witchcraft, or genetically inherited;
Fact - Tetanus is caused by *Clostridium tetani* bacteria when they enter the body through a wound.
- **Myth** - Tetanus cannot be prevented;
Fact - Tetanus can be prevented through vaccination.



What is tetanus?

Tetanus is a serious disease caused by a toxin (poison) produced by a bacteria called clostridium tetani which is found worldwide in soil, dust, fecal waste and manure. It is characterized by painful muscle stiffness and results in death if not timely and appropriately treated.

What is Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus?

Maternal and neonatal tetanus is a deadly disease that can occur as a result of unclean baby deliveries or abortions and unhygienic umbilical cord practices (applying cow dung, soil, ashes to the wound and cutting the cord with unclean instruments e.g. dirty razor blades and knives.

Neonatal and Maternal Tetanus deaths can be easily prevented through vaccination.



How does a disease that kills many newborns remain unrecognized?

It remains invisible because the disease and death occur in very young infants usually within the first 28 days of life; most infants suffer and die at home, without ever coming in contact with a health provider. That is why neonatal tetanus is called the 'Silent Killer'.

What are the symptoms of Tetanus?

The following are symptoms of Tetanus:-

- Painful muscle stiffness all over the body
- Seizures (jerking or staring)
- Fever and sweating
- Difficulty in swallowing
- High blood pressure and fast heart rate
- Severe jaw muscle stiffness makes one unable to open the mouth hence the name "Lock Jaw".

In newborns

- Tetanus can occur from 3 days up to 28 days after birth
- The baby stops suckling suddenly
- Body becomes stiff and irritable
- The stiffness can be so strong that it may break the child's spine
- Death follows in most cases.

How does a person get infected with tetanus?

- People get infected when the bacterial spores enter the body through open wounds; multiply and produce toxins that cause tetanus
- Tetanus infects people of all ages, but newborn babies are more at risk to tetanus due to the umbilical cord wound and weak immunity
- Tetanus is not transmitted from person to person.

2

What is Tetanus vaccine?

Tetanus vaccine protects against tetanus when a full dose is taken at specified time intervals.

A girl or woman will need a full dose of 5 vaccinations as shown below:-

Dose	When To Get Vaccinated	Length of Protection
Tetanus Toxoid Vaccine 1	First contact with a girl of aged 15 years and above/first ANC visit by a pregnant woman	None
Tetanus Toxoid Vaccine 2	At least 4 weeks after TT1	1-3 years
Tetanus Toxoid Vaccine 3	At least 6 weeks after TT2	5 years
Tetanus Toxoid Vaccine 4	At least 1 year after TT3	10 years
Tetanus Toxoid Vaccine 5	At least 1 year after TT4	20 years (lifelong)

Children should get at least three doses of the tetanus vaccine given in combination with other vaccines at the following ages for maximum protection:

- First dose at 6 weeks
- Second dose at 10 weeks
- Third dose given at 14 weeks

Recovery from tetanus doesn't result in immunity.

3

Is the Tetanus vaccine safe?

Tetanus vaccine is very safe, however few and mild side effects occur in rare situations:-

- Redness and swelling at the injection site,
- Slight pain from the injection
- Slight Fever.

Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus Elimination

Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus elimination aims to reduce the number of maternal and neonatal tetanus cases to such low levels that MNT is no longer a major public health problem. A country attains an elimination status when it reports less than one case of neonatal tetanus per 1000 live births in every district.

Globally in order to eliminate tetanus the following strategies are used

- Routine vaccination of women during ante-natal clinic visits
- Vaccination of babies and through
- Supplemental immunizations that target girls and women of child bearing age and promotion of more hygienic deliveries and vaccination of babies.
- Promotion of hygienic and safe deliveries.

From the most recent health survey 2008/2009, coverage against neonatal tetanus amongst pregnant women ranges from 63 % of women in North Eastern province to 81% of those in Central province. In order to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus, Kenya must reach 90% coverage.

The Ministry of Health monitors the number of cases of Maternal and Neonatal tetanus occurring in each district. Each case of Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus

4