

Stay strong: protect your mob from diphtheria

What is diphtheria?

Diphtheria is a serious bacterial infection that affects your throat or skin. It can produce a toxin (poison) that makes people very sick. In severe cases people may need to go to hospital. Diphtheria can be life-threatening, so it's important to look out for signs.

How do you catch diphtheria?

- When another person with diphtheria coughs or sneezes
- By touching infected skin sores
- By sharing towels, clothes or bedding
- Touching surfaces that have germs on them

If you are not sure or worried, talk to your health worker, doctor or community health service. They can provide advice to help keep you and your family safe.

What is the treatment?

- Having a simple swab test to confirm whether you have diphtheria, so you receive the right care.
- Receiving treatment with strong medicines (antibiotics and antitoxin). Your healthcare team will decide the best treatment for you. Some people may need to go to hospital for extra care and support.

How do you protect your mob?

Most children are immunised from 2 months to 4 years, and given a booster in year 7 through school or a Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander health clinic. It is safe, free, and provides the best protection, so check that your family is up to date. Adults may also need a booster every 5 to 10 years.

Staying away from others while you're contagious helps prevent the spread of the infection. Careful handwashing by everyone in your home is important for limiting the spread of the infection.

How can I check if I'm immunised?

You can visit your local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO), community health clinic, or GP. The healthcare team or a Health Worker can check for you.



What to look out for



- Sore throat
- Hard to breathe
- Swollen neck



- A thick, grey/white coating in throat
- Hard to swallow food or drink



- Sores or ulcers that take a long time to heal



- Fever
- Runny nose
- Noisy breathing or hoarse voice

For health advice call
13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)