

Shots Said Best Method to Protect Against Dread Tetanus Infections

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County Health Officer

Tetanus is an acute infectious disorder of the neuromuscular system that is of relatively infrequent occurrence. Owing to the severity of the disease and the average fatality rate of about 55 per cent

of treated cases, however, tetanus is generally regarded with extreme apprehension. But, in spite of the fact that the disease is difficult to cure, it is easy enough to prevent.

MOST INFANTS and young children are protected against

the disease through immunizations given by either private physicians or child health conference physicians, but older children and adults do have an equal degree of security. So far this year, eight cases of tetanus have been reported in the jurisdiction of the Los An-

geles County Health Dept. Ages of the victims ranged from three to 84 years, six of them being mature adults. Two of the patients, both over 60, failed to recover.

The causative agent (tetanus bacillus) is anaerobic in nature. In other words, when air is

excluded from a wound infected with the organisms they produce a toxin that invades the central nervous system.

AT THE TIME of injury, the bacilli may be carried deep into tissues where the air does not penetrate, or a more superficial wound may heal over and so provide the airless environment that is required for the formation of the toxin.

Tetanus bacteria are found just about everywhere in the

soil and enter the body through a break in the skin. Though minor injuries like apparently inconsequential burns, abrasions, cuts and lacerations are less likely to be followed by tetanus than deep puncture wounds or serious injuries, the danger is there nonetheless. Every injury which causes an opening in the skin is a potential site of infection.

THE FIRST SYMPTOMS of illness usually appear in from

four days to three weeks after infection. The most characteristic signs are progressive stiffness of the neck muscles and trismus (lockjaw) resulting from spasms of the jaw muscles. Within 24 to 48 hours, the trunk and extremities may also be involved.

The preferred method of protection against tetanus is by the administration of tetanus toxoid. This usually consists of two injections of toxoid given a month apart, which enables the body to build up a state of resistance to the tetanus bacilli. To maintain immunity, a booster dose is given about a year later and every four or five years thereafter. Should injury occur, a small booster dose of toxoid is administered and this affords protection against the disease.

form of protection lasts only a short time.

TETANUS ANTITOXIN, which is a horse serum product, may also cause severe allergic reactions which include hives, asthma, fever, paralysis, and occasionally death. It is estimated that such undesirable reactions occur in about 20 to 30 per cent of cases in which tetanus antitoxin is given. Since the antitoxin may present a greater hazard to the individual than the disease itself, individuals already immunized with tetanus toxoid should always carry a card with them on which this information is given.

College Officials At Conference

Two Harbor College administrators today are participating in a statewide conference of junior college administrators at Yosemite.

John A. Grasham, dean of instruction, and Wendell C. Black, president, are representing Harbor College at the meeting of the California Junior College Assn. extending from Oct. 31 to Nov. 2.

Following the theme "Tomorrow's Junior Colleges," the conference will discuss the relationship of state universities, colleges and junior colleges, technical education and current legislation.

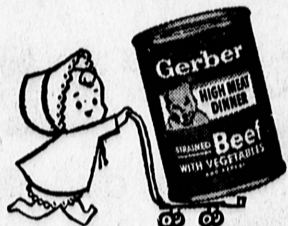
President Black is a member of the executive committee of the CPCA.

PRIVATE PHYSICIANS give tetanus toxoid immunizations, but those persons who do not have a family doctor may wish to attend the dollar tetanus prevention clinics which are sponsored by the Los Angeles County Medical Assn. These clinics are held in various locations and information as to place, dates, and hours may be obtained by contacting the association at 1925 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles 5 (HUBBARD 3-1581).

In cases of emergency, the person who has not received tetanus toxoid may obtain quick protection against the disease by the administration of tetanus antitoxin, but this



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