



TETANUS

Department of Health and Human Services

CDC & ATSDR

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Tetanus enters the body through cuts in the skin. Children can also get the disease after a severe burn, an ear infection, tooth infection, or from animal bites. Although rusty nails are often blamed, the disease is caused by bacterial toxin — not rust. So, you can get tetanus from a shiny nail just as easily as a rusty one. Symptoms usually begin with a headache, crankiness, and spasms of the jaw muscles. There are only about 50 cases of tetanus a year in the U.S., but 3 out of every 10 people who get it will die. Tetanus vaccine is usually given to children together with pertussis and diphtheria vaccines in one shot called DTaP.

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