



Tetanus

Tetanus is an acute, often fatal but vaccine-preventable disease, found worldwide in soil and dung of many animals. The incidence of tetanus is dependant on vaccine coverage, with the richer countries having fewer cases than the poorer countries, where immunisation schedules may be more variable.

How is Tetanus spread?

As the tetanus spores are found in the soil, the disease is acquired by dirt containing the spores entering a wound, which could be quite minor. It is important then to be aware of the risk of accidents whilst traveling, and seeking medical advice for tetanus prone wounds, ie wounds or burns that need surgery or wounds with tissue loss, or puncture type wounds that have been in contact with soil or manure.

How can you avoid Tetanus

Tetanus is very uncommon these days due to good vaccination programmes. However, as no country is free of tetanus you should ensure that you maintain your immunity. This is especially important in those over 50 years of age, as they were born before the routine vaccination schedules for tetanus were implemented, and may not of had the 5 doses recommended to give full cover.

Vaccine recommendations:

Tetanus is now given as part of a combined vaccine (with diphtheria and inactivated polio) and is part of the childhood vaccination programme, so if your last booster dose was more than 10 years ago you may need a further booster vaccination.