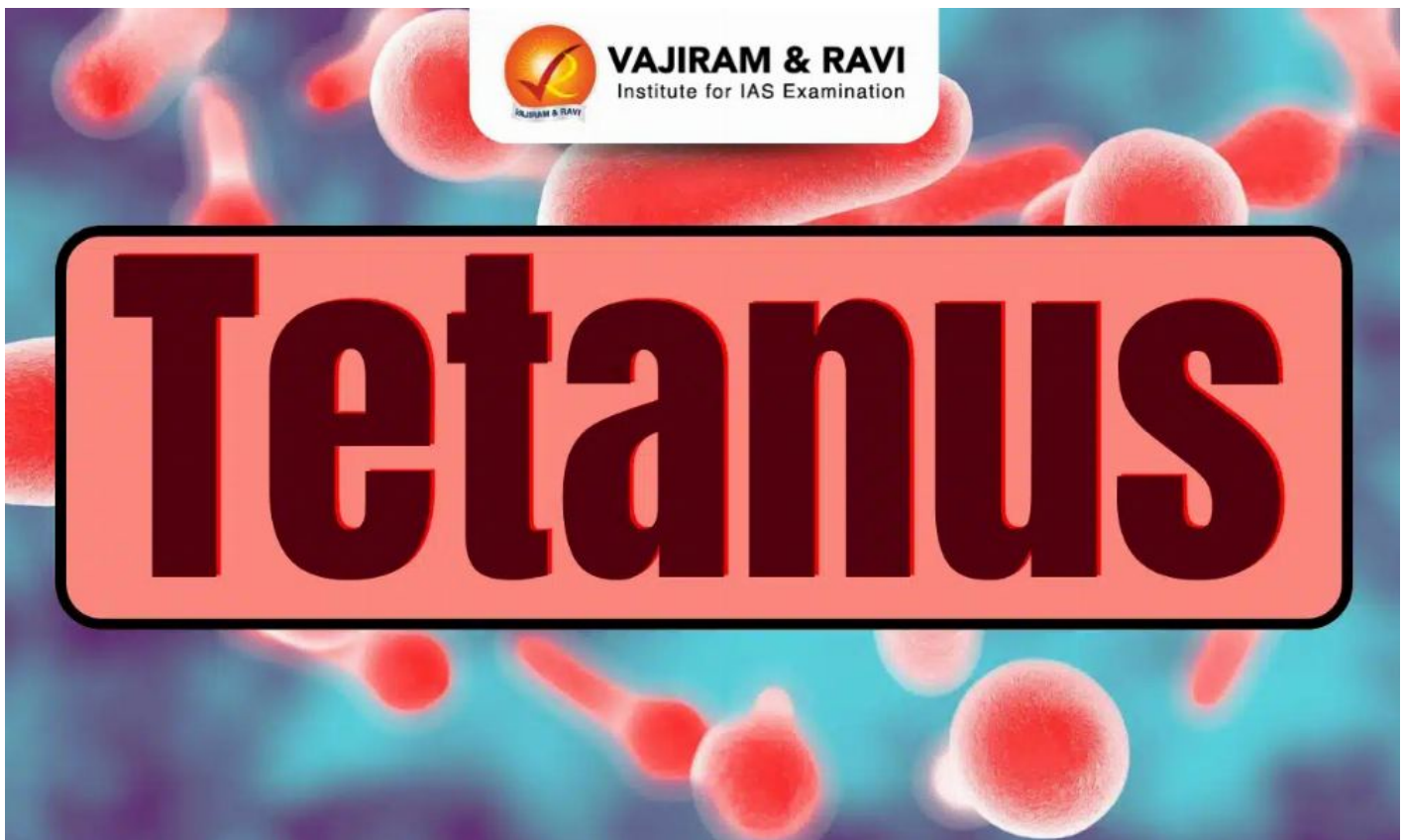


Tetanus

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Tetanus Latest News

Tetanus, once thought to have been eradicated, is resurging in the US.

About Tetanus

- Tetanus, also known as **lockjaw**, is a serious **bacterial infection** that **affects** the body's **nervous system**.
- It's caused by a **poison (toxin)** made by the **bacterium Clostridium tetani** (C. tetani).
- The bacterium usually **enters the body** through an **open wound**.
- Tetanus **bacteria live in soil and manure**. They can **also be found in the human intestine** and other places.
- Tetanus occurs **more often in warmer climates** or **during the warmer months**.
- It's **not spread from person to person**.
- Anyone can get tetanus, but the disease is particularly **common and serious in newborn babies and pregnant women** who have **not been sufficiently immunized** with tetanus-toxoid-containing vaccines.

Tetanus Symptoms

- Once inside the body, tetanus **toxins interfere** with the **release of neurotransmitters, leading to muscle contractions** and intractable spasms.
- Symptoms typically occur between 3 and 21 days (average 8 days) after exposure.
- The **early hallmark** of tetanus is '**lockjaw**', hence the name. It is a painful condition in which the **jaw cannot move or open properly**.
- **Other symptoms** include:
 - **Trouble swallowing**
 - Sudden, **involuntary muscle spasms** — often in the stomach
 - **Painful muscle stiffness** throughout the body
 - **Seizures** (jerking or staring)
 - Headache
 - Fever and sweating
 - Changes in blood pressure and heart rate
- The disease can cause **serious health problems** such as **laryngospasm** (uncontrolled tightening of the vocal cords), fractures, **pulmonary embolism (blockage in the lungs caused by a blood clot)**, **aspiration pneumonia** (lung infection from inhaling saliva or vomit), and breathing difficulties.
- In **severe cases**, tetanus can lead to **death**.

Tetanus Treatment

- There's **no cure** for tetanus.
- **Treatment** focuses on **managing symptoms** and complications until the effects of the tetanus toxin resolve.
- **People who recover** from tetanus **do not have natural immunity** and can be infected again.

Tetanus Prevention

- Tetanus is **completely preventable by being immunized (vaccinated)**.
- Immunization usually protects against tetanus infection for 10 years.
- The **childhood schedule** includes **five doses**, followed by **boosters in adolescence and every 10 years**.
- **Pregnant women** are also advised to **receive Tdap to protect their newborns**.

News: **TOI**

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