

Vaccinating for Clostridial diseases

While there are many vaccines you can give to sheep and goats, the only universally-recommended one is for clostridial diseases. The most common vaccine given is CDT (toxoid). It protects against enterotoxemia ("overeating disease") caused by *Clostridium perfringens* types C and D and tetanus caused by *Clostridium tetani*. 7, 8, or 9-way vaccines provide protection against additional clostridial diseases, including malignant edema and black leg.

Clostridial vaccines should be given subcutaneously (under the skin), using a short, small-gauge needle. (e.g., half-inch, 20-gauge). There are many acceptable vaccination spots, including behind the shoulder, high on the neck, behind the elbow, in the axillary space, and over the ribs. Clean needles should be used for injections.



Newborns get antibodies to clostridial diseases from the colostrum when their dams have been vaccinated. Colostral immunity is maximized when dams are vaccinated in late pregnancy. Two doses of the vaccine are needed if ewes/does were not previously vaccinated.

Lambs/kids should receive their first clostridial vaccine when they are approximately 4–8 weeks of age, followed by a booster 3–4 weeks later. Feeder lambs/kids should receive two vaccinations.



Toxoids vs. antitoxins
Toxoids provide longer-lasting immunity but are not effective immediately. They help to prevent disease. Antitoxins provide immediate short-term immunity. They are used for treatment or to provide immediate short-term immunity.



It's a good idea to give rams, bucks, and pet wethers annual boosters, too.