Home improvement expert Bob Vila has teamed up with the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases and the National Coalition for Adult Immunization to encourage families to protect themselves against tetanus exposure before they tackle home renovation projects.

“After more than 30 years of home renovation projects, I understand the importance of taking safety precautions, including staying up to date on my tetanus booster every 10 years.”
— Bob Vila

As the popularity of do-it-yourself home renovation projects grows, so do the chances of injuries. You may be surprised to learn that scraping yourself while putting up molding or clearing debris may put you at risk for a tetanus infection. I didn’t know that myself, but it’s true. All it takes is a small wound to expose you to infection and a serious disease.

The good news is that you can protect yourself by keeping your tetanus immunization current. Getting vaccinated is a smart plan, because many home projects involve the use of materials or tools where tetanus bacteria gather. That’s why I support the Power of 10™ campaign.

You can limit your exposure to tetanus bacteria by wearing gloves and protective clothing. But the best insurance against tetanus is a 10-year booster vaccine. So if it’s been 10, do it again!

Before you update your home, make sure the entire family is up to date. Ask your health care provider or local health clinic whether it’s time for a tetanus booster to keep your protection strong.

For more details about the Power of 10™ campaign, tetanus, and diphtheria, visit www.nfid.org.

The Power of 10™ campaign is made possible by an unrestricted educational grant to the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases from sanofi pasteur.
More than a million U.S. families take on home renovation projects every year, and that puts them at risk for a tetanus infection.

It doesn’t take much. Just a little cut, scrape, puncture wound, burn, or splinter—the common hazards of working around ordinary tools and supplies. That includes hammers and nails, wiring and molding, carpeting and tiling, and general construction debris.

**Safety Tips**
for Home Improvement Activities

- Put on glasses or goggles to protect your eyes.
- Use gloves to minimize the chance of cuts or scrapes.
- Wear hard-toe shoes to shield your feet.
- Use kneepads to avoid wear on joints.
- Supervise young family members and teach them proper safety precautions.
- Make sure your whole family is up to date with the 10-year Td booster.

**Tetanus: More facts you should know**

- Tetanus can appear any time from three days to three weeks after exposure to the bacteria.
- Symptoms usually start with stiffness in the neck and trouble swallowing (that’s why the disease is also called lockjaw).
- The most common form can cause paralysis and is fatal for one of every 10 people infected.
- Tetanus is very painful and often requires a long hospital stay and intensive rehabilitation.
- Tetanus is not contagious; you can’t catch it from someone else.

**Diphtheria: The “d” in the Td booster**

- Diphtheria is highly contagious, spreading from person to person.
- It infects the throat and tonsil regions.
- Bacteria that grow in infected areas can cause heart failure and paralysis.
- Diphtheria is common in 87 countries and still circulates in some parts of the United States and Canada.

**Myths about Tetanus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Fact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only people who work outside are at risk for tetanus.</td>
<td><strong>FACT:</strong> Nearly half of all injuries that result in tetanus happen indoors—and at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can get tetanus only from a rusty nail.</td>
<td><strong>FACT:</strong> Tetanus bacteria are widespread. They exist on most surfaces and materials—even in dust and soil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You need a tetanus vaccine only when you have a wound that lands you in the emergency room.</td>
<td><strong>FACT:</strong> Tetanus is completely preventable with a simple booster, once every 10 years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends a booster vaccine every 10 years throughout life to maintain protection against tetanus. This schedule provides almost 100% immunity.

The tetanus vaccine is most often combined with the diphtheria vaccine—called the “Td” booster—since both are needed every 10 years, starting around age 11.

**Tetanus bacteria** can enter your body through even the tiniest wound—a small cut, scrape, or splinter.

Tetanus is rare, but it’s extremely painful and can be fatal.

Without routine tetanus boosters, the risk for tetanus infection rises greatly.