

# Protect your Family from Pertussis (Whooping Cough)



## 1. What is Pertussis?

Pertussis is a very contagious disease. It can spread when a person with pertussis coughs or sneezes. Anyone can get pertussis, even if he/she has had pertussis in the past. A person with pertussis can spread the disease for several weeks unless treated.

## 2. What are the symptoms?

Sometimes, it starts with mild cold-like symptoms:

- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sneezing
- Watery eyes
- Dry cough

Then, after a week or two, symptoms start getting worse:

- Sudden, uncontrollable coughing attacks
- Problems breathing
- Vomiting after cough
- Feeling very tired

Your **infant/child** may have the following symptoms:

- Trouble drinking liquids
- Whooping sound after cough
- A pause in breathing (apnea)
- Frequent vomiting
- Bluish skin
- Only runny nose

## 3. How serious is pertussis?

Pertussis can cause serious illnesses, leading to hospital stays and even death. Babies are at the most risk. Babies can have pneumonia, dehydration, seizures, and brain damage. Adults can also experience broken or damaged ribs, hernias, and pneumonia.

## 4. How do you prevent it?

The best way to prevent pertussis is to be up-to-date with vaccines. Protection from the vaccine does go away with time. You can also slow the spread of pertussis by covering your cough and sneeze, washing your hands often, and staying home if you are sick. If you think you or your loved one may have it, contact your doctor right away to help prevent others from getting sick.

## 5. What is the treatment?

A doctor may give certain antibiotics to treat pertussis. It is important to not go to school or work for the first 5 days of treatment since the person with pertussis can still spread the disease.

**In summary**, pertussis is still a threat today to everyone. The best way to protect you and your community is by getting the vaccines. Talk to your doctor or Public Health right away if you are concerned about pertussis.

### Vaccine Recommendations:

**Doctors recommend that your child get the DTaP vaccine for best protection.**

- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 15 through 18 months
- 4 through 6 years

**Pre-teens and adults, including pregnant women, should get the Tdap booster vaccine.**

- 11-12 years of age
- Pregnant women during their 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester
- Persons who care for infants

### For More Information:

**Don't have health insurance or a regular doctor?**

Dial **2-1-1** for a list of low or no cost vaccine clinics

**Want more information on vaccine or vaccine requirements for school entry?** Visit

<http://www.shotsforschool.org/>

**Want more information?**

Call Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Vaccine-Preventable Disease Control Program at **(213) 351-7800**