

! Prevention is Key

- Be sure your children are fully immunized.
- Practice good hand-washing. Wash 15-20 seconds with warm, soapy water and wipe vigorously. Sing the “Happy Birthday” song or practice your ABCs for the 20 seconds.
- Cover mouth when coughing.
- Throw used tissues away.
- Stay home if you are sick!

Other Important Points

- Young children who have not been immunized are at the highest risk and have the most severe symptoms.
- Infants less than six months old, adolescents, and adults often do not have the characteristic “whoop.”
- Symptoms may occur 7-10 days after exposure; can be as long as 21 days.
- Past pertussis infections do not give lifelong immunity.

Complications May Include

- Pneumonia
- Middle ear infection
- Loss of appetite
- Dehydration
- Seizures
- Encephalopathy (brain disorders)
- Apneic episodes (stops breathing for short periods of time)
- Death

***80% of deaths occur
in children under age
1 year old.***

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Dev 10/2005

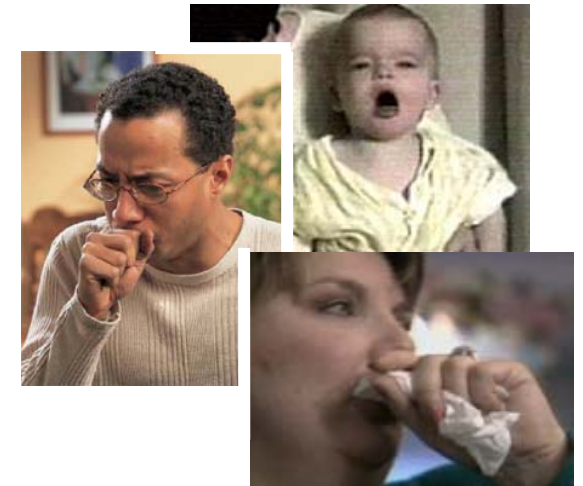
Updated 08/2006

Code #425

The Health & Community Services programs are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

The Facts About

PERTUSSIS



What is Pertussis?

Also known as whooping cough, pertussis is a highly contagious disease of the respiratory tract caused by bacteria found in the mouth, nose, and throat of an infected person.

Who gets Pertussis?

Pertussis may occur at any age. Severe illness is more common in young children who have not been immunized. Other people develop milder symptoms. Pertussis is difficult to diagnose because early symptoms of pertussis mimic cold symptoms.

How Pertussis Spreads

Pertussis is spread when infected people cough or sneeze spraying water droplets that contain pertussis germs into the air. Touching or sharing freshly contaminated items, such as tissues or cups may also spread disease.

The incubation time, the time from exposure to the beginning of symptoms, is usually 7-10 days with a range of 5-21 days.

Symptoms

Early Stage

- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Low grade fever
- Mild cough; gradually worsens over 1-2 weeks. Usually, worse at night.

Later Stage

- Cough grows more severe and uncontrolled; may be followed by crowing or high-pitched “whoop.”
- Cough may be productive with clear, thin mucus.
- Vomiting may occur following coughing spells.
- Person may become blue from lack of air.
- Cough may last for 1- 2 months.



If you have any of the above symptoms for two weeks or longer, contact your physician.

What to Do

If you suspect you or a family member have symptoms of pertussis:

- See physician as soon as possible.
- Physician may do lab tests to show if pertussis is present.
- Your doctor may start antibiotic therapy before test results are known, to protect you and others. Follow the instructions and take the antibiotic until it is gone. Do not quit taking the antibiotic early.
- If your doctor suspects you may have pertussis, you must stay isolated at home for five days. Stay away from others, especially young children and infants, as you may be highly contagious.

Vaccinations

Routine immunization of infants and children with Pertussis (aP) vaccine is recommended at 2, 4, 6, and 12-15 months of age with a booster dose at 4-6 years of age.

Adolescents and adults, ages 10 – 64, who have not had a tetanus-containing vaccine in the past five years, may receive the Tdap (Tee-dap) vaccine. All adults should have a tetanus booster every ten years.