

Pertussis (Whooping cough)

Why are we concerned about pertussis?

Pertussis is a highly contagious and potentially very serious bacterial disease. It may begin like a common cold but the coughing can last for weeks or months. Babies and young children are at greatest risk of developing severe complications from this disease.



How does pertussis spread?

Pertussis spreads through coughing, sneezing, or sharing close breathing space. The risk of spread is highest for the first 1-2 weeks that a person has symptoms, but they can be contagious for several weeks.

What are the symptoms of pertussis?

- Runny or stuffed-up nose
- Low-grade fever (less than 100.4°F)
- Mild, occasional cough
- Coughing “fits” lasting up to 10 weeks - may vomit during or after these fits
- A high-pitched "whoop" when inhaling
- Temporary breathing stoppage (apnea)
- Rib fracture from coughing

How can you prevent pertussis?

In addition to practicing good hygiene and taking antibiotics if prescribed, the best prevention is vaccination. There are two types of vaccines to protect against pertussis: DTaP for young children and Tdap for pregnant people and preteens through adults.

For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/>



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