



## ABOUT WHOOPING COUGH

Whooping cough (pertussis) causes a severe cough and may last for months. It spreads easily by coughing and sneezing.

The illness usually starts with mild cold symptoms or a cough, which can turn into severe coughing. You are most contagious during the first 2 weeks after coughing begins.



## WHOOPING COUGH IN BABIES AND CHILDREN

Whooping cough is most serious for babies. Whooping cough can lead to pneumonia and breathing problems, and in rare cases, brain damage or death. Most patients hospitalized for whooping cough are babies under 6 months.

Babies and children often have severe coughing spells that make it hard to breathe, eat, drink, and sleep. Extreme coughing can result in vomiting and exhaustion. They may make a loud “whooping” sound when they inhale. Some babies may turn bluish from lack of oxygen.

Some babies might only have a mild cough or no cough at all.



## AVOID SPREADING WHOOPING COUGH TO BABIES

Babies usually get whooping cough from family or friends who do not know they have it.

**If you are sick with a cough, avoid contact with babies and pregnant women.**



## VACCINATE TO PROTECT BABIES AND CHILDREN

DTap and Tdap vaccines help protect against whooping cough and also diphtheria and tetanus.

## WHEN TO VACCINATE

Get your child vaccinated with DTaP at the following ages for the most protection:



- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 15-18 months
- 4-6 years
- Get a dose of Tdap vaccine at age 11-12 years to boost immunity

All adults over age 19 should get a single dose of Tdap, especially if they will have contact with babies.

## PROTECTION DURING PREGNANCY



Pregnant women can best protect their babies by getting the Tdap vaccine during the third trimester of each pregnancy. Moms pass short-term protection from the vaccine to their babies. This protects babies until they are old enough for their first DTaP vaccination.

## HOW WELL DO THESE VACCINES WORK?

DTap and Tdap work well for most people, but for some, the immunity from the vaccine doesn't fully develop. The protection can also decrease over time. That's why occasionally a vaccinated person gets whooping cough. However, even in these instances, the vaccine still has benefits:



- In most cases, the cough won't last as many days.
- Coughing fits, whooping, and vomiting after coughing fits occur less often.
- The number of children who temporarily stop breathing, turn blue, and vomit is less.

**For more information:** [www.cdc.gov/features/pertussis](http://www.cdc.gov/features/pertussis)

Updated 12/14/17