

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

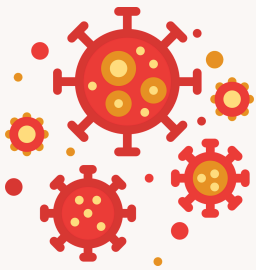


Public Health
Solutions



Severe coughing fits that can last for weeks.

- Whooping cough can cause rapid, violent, and uncontrolled coughing fits until all air is gone from the lungs. These coughing fits can go on for up to 10 weeks or more.
- Pertussis is known as “whooping cough” because of the “whooping” sound that people can make when gasping for air after a fit of coughing.



Whooping cough is very contagious.

- The bacteria that cause whooping cough spread easily from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, etc.
- Even if someone has mild symptoms and doesn’t know they have whooping cough, they can still spread germs to others.



Whooping cough can be very serious, especially for babies.

- Whooping cough can cause serious illness in people of all ages and can even be life threatening, especially in babies.
- Babies may not cough at all. Instead, they may have apnea (life-threatening pauses in breathing) or struggle to breathe.
- About one third of babies younger than 1 year old who get whooping cough need care in the hospital. 1 out of 100 babies who get treatment in the hospital die.



Manage whooping cough and reduce the risk of spreading germs to others:

- Any time someone is struggling to breathe, it is important to get them to a doctor right away.
- Doctors generally treat whooping cough with antibiotics and treating early can make the illness less serious and help prevent spreading.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough and sneeze. Don’t cough into your hands, you can spread germs this way.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- To protect you and your loved ones, stay up to date with recommended pertussis vaccines.