

Everyone should be vaccinated for whooping cough.

# Whooping Cough

**If you have a cold or worsening cough that lasts more than a week:**

- Stay home from school, work and other activities until you see a healthcare provider.
- Avoid contact with babies under age 1 and pregnant women.
- Call your healthcare provider to say you think it might be whooping cough.



## What is whooping cough?

Whooping cough and pertussis are names for the same disease that infects the lungs and throat. It is easily spread. Most people can be treated and recover, but babies under age 1 can face pneumonia, seizures, brain damage or even death.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

Whooping cough starts like the common cold with a runny nose, sneeze and cough. The cough gets worse, causing coughing spells and lasting weeks to months.

During coughing spells, people can gag, gasp or make high-pitched whoops. They struggle to eat, drink or breathe. They can cough so hard that they vomit.

METRO AREA PERTUSSIS SURVEILLANCE

## How does whooping cough spread?

Whooping cough spreads when an infected person sneezes, coughs or sprays the germs from their mouth or nose.

People can spread the disease from the first sign they are ill until they have been on antibiotics for five days.

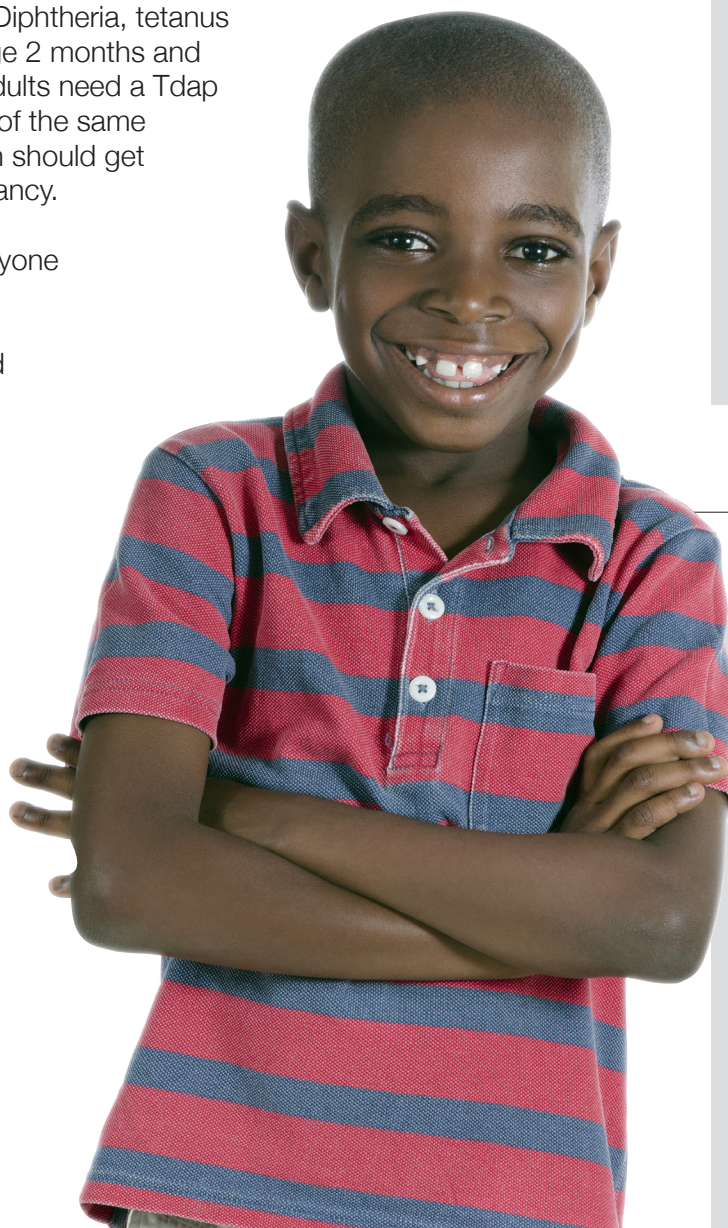
Teens and adults may only be mildly sick, but can give whooping cough to babies and young children. Parents and other close family can give it to newborn babies.

## How can I prevent pertussis?

- Keeping up on your shots is the best way to avoid whooping cough. All children need a series of five DTaP shots (Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis) between age 2 months and kindergarten. Teens and adults need a Tdap booster (the adult version of the same vaccine). Pregnant women should get a booster with each pregnancy.
- Keep babies away from anyone with a cough.
- Cover your own cough and wash your hands.

## Is the whooping cough vaccine safe?

The vaccine is safe. Vaccinated people can still get whooping cough, but the vaccine is still the best way to prevent the disease. The shot can cause some temporary pain or fever, but getting sick with whooping cough is much more serious.



## HOW IS WHOOPING COUGH TREATED?

Antibiotics are used to treat whooping cough. The pills may not make people feel better right away, but will make them less likely to spread the disease.

Anyone with whooping cough will be asked to stay home from school for five days. That is how long it takes for the pills to work and to prevent the disease from spreading.

## WHO TO CALL

For more information about whooping cough or the vaccine, call your health care provider or the Metro Area Pertussis Surveillance (MAPS) program: 503-988-8816.