



## PERTUSSIS

### What is pertussis?

Pertussis is a respiratory illness commonly known as whooping cough. It is caused by a bacteria called *Bordetella pertussis*.

### Who gets pertussis?

Anyone can get pertussis regardless of age: babies, children, teenagers, and adults.

### How is pertussis spread?

Pertussis is spread to another person by coughing, sneezing, or sharing breathing space.

### What are the symptoms of pertussis?

Early symptoms can last one to two weeks and usually include runny nose, low grade fever, mild occasional cough, and apnea. Later symptoms include paroxysms, vomiting during or after coughing fits, and exhaustion after coughing fits.

### How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms of pertussis develop within five to 10 days after you are exposed. Sometimes pertussis symptoms do not develop for as long as three weeks.

### Should an infected person be excluded from work or school?

Yes, an infected person is recommended to be isolated for 21 days from onset of cough if appropriate anti-microbial therapy is not administered or for five days after initiation of effective therapy.

### What is the treatment for pertussis?

Antibiotics may shorten the amount of time someone is contagious.

### What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of pertussis?

The best way to prevent pertussis among babies, children, teens, pregnant women, and adults is to get vaccinated with DTap and Tdap. If someone has pertussis, a doctor and local health department may recommend preventive antibiotics. Practice good hygiene: cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, put used tissues in a wastebasket, and if a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands. Wash your hands often with soap and water at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not available.

### Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/index.html>

**Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology**  
**24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156**

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