



What is pertussis?

- Pertussis (also known as whooping cough) is a very contagious disease that affects the lungs.
- The first symptoms of pertussis may look like the common cold. Symptoms may include cough, sneezing, runny nose and possibly a low grade fever.
- The cough often occurs in bursts. The typical “whooping” sound may be heard in older children, but is less common in infants and adults. Symptoms can last several months.
- Anyone at any age can get pertussis.
- Pertussis is the most common vaccine-preventable disease in the United States.
- Many states, including Minnesota, currently are seeing outbreaks of pertussis.

Why should I be concerned?

- Pertussis in infants is often severe and can be life threatening.
- Complications may include bacterial pneumonia, seizures and death.
- Infants cannot begin vaccination for pertussis until 2 months of age.

When should children receive a pertussis immunization?

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises that children receive pertussis immunization at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15-18 months, 4-6 years and again after age 11.
- Children who have received some or all of the recommended vaccinations may still get pertussis disease, but usually have a milder course.

When should adults receive a pertussis booster?

- The CDC advises that all adults receive one pertussis booster any time after age 19. The vaccination for pertussis is combined with the vaccine for tetanus and diphtheria.
- If you are unsure if you have received your immunization or received the tetanus/diphtheria vaccination without pertussis, it is recommended you request re-vaccination by your primary provider or your county health department.

What if I am pregnant or want to become pregnant?

- If you are not currently pregnant and have not had a pertussis booster as an adult, it is recommended that you be vaccinated now.
- If you have not had a pertussis booster as an adult and currently are pregnant, it is advised to have this vaccine between 27-36 weeks gestation.
- If you have already delivered your baby, you should get the vaccine as soon as possible (the vaccine is safe for breastfeeding women).

How do I protect my baby?

- It is recommended that any person having direct contact with a child less than one year of age be immunized against pertussis. This may include mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents, and childcare providers.
- The CDC advises individuals receive the vaccination at least two weeks prior to contact with the infant.



Please call your provider if you have any questions.

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