

Protect Against Pertussis



Parents, Teachers, Friends

Learn about Pertussis

Pertussis (whooping cough) is a highly contagious respiratory disease often distinguished by the severe and long-lasting cough of those infected. It is named after the "whoop" sound children and adults make when they try to breathe in during or after a severe coughing spell.

Symptoms:

Pertussis usually starts with cold or flu-like symptoms such as runny nose, sneezing, fever and a mild cough. These symptoms can last up to two weeks and are followed by increasingly severe coughing spells. Fever, if present, is usually mild.

How It is Spread:

Pertussis (whooping cough) is caused by a bacteria that is found in the mouth, nose and throat of an infected person, and is spread through close contact with discharges from the respiratory tract of infected persons, i.e. when an infected person talks, sneezes, or coughs. Older children and adults commonly spread the disease to infants for whom it can be particularly dangerous and even fatal.

Controlling Spread: Infected family members can spread pertussis throughout the household. If a family member has been diagnosed with pertussis, it is important to discuss with your healthcare provider who may have been exposed and who might benefit from antibiotic therapy to prevent further spread.



How To Prevent Pertussis:

The best prevention is immunization. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is recommending the following:

- DTaP vaccination of all infants at 2, 4 and 6 months
- DTaP vaccination booster for all children at age 12-15 months
- DTaP vaccination booster for all children at age 4-6 years
- **Tdap** vaccination booster for all adolescents at age 11-12 years
- **Tdap** vaccination booster for adolescents 13-18 years (who have not received a Tdap booster)
- **Tdap** vaccination booster for adults less than 65 years old

In addition, people who are caring for an infant or are a member of a household with an infant, should be vaccinated. This includes:

- **All** adult infant care providers with Tdap vaccine including adults age 65 and older;
- Under-immunized preadolescents (ages 7-10 years) with Tdap vaccine.

Healthy habits such as washing hands regularly, covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing; avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth and staying home when ill help to prevent the spread of pertussis and other respiratory illnesses.

Tdap booster vaccines protect older children and adults from pertussis! Ask your healthcare provider about them or call JCPH Immunization Program at 303-232-6301



Jefferson County Public Health

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