

Health Alert:

Pertussis



Pertussis, more commonly called “whooping cough,” is a bacterial infection involving the respiratory tract.

The bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*, found in the mouth, throat and nose of an infected person, is responsible for the spread of pertussis.

Symptoms include:

- Severe cough; can cause the characteristic “whoop” sound
- Fever
- Runny nose
- Thick phlegm
- Headache

There are ways to help prevent the spread of pertussis.

Ensure your pertussis (Tdap) immunization is up-to-date. Pertussis in infants can be deadly; high rates of immunization in the community reduces this risk. Adults and people who are pregnant should get a Tdap immunization.

If you do contract pertussis, stay home for 5 days after the start of antibiotics so you don’t infect others. Reduce the spread of germs by coughing and sneezing into your sleeve. Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water. Drink lots of fluids to stay hydrated and get lots of rest to feel better faster.

Contact a medical provider if:

- You have a cough lasting longer than 2 weeks,
- You have an underlying medical condition such as diabetes, pregnancy, or asthma,
- Your symptoms worsen significantly,
- Your symptoms have not improved within 10 days or
- You have come in contact with someone known to have pertussis; it can be transmitted even if you are not having symptoms