

Fast Facts

- Pertussis is also known as "whooping cough" because of the "whooping" sound that many children and adults make when gasping for air after a fit of coughing.
- Whooping cough, if not treated, can lead to serious complications, especially in infants and young children.
- Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent whooping cough.
 - DTaP vaccinations are recommended for infants and children.
 - Vaccination of all pre-teens, teens and adults with Tdap is important, especially for pregnant women and families with new infants.
- Whooping cough vaccines are required for childcare and school entry.

Prevention Tips

- Get vaccinated.
- Cover your cough and sneeze.
- Wash your hands often.
- Stay home if you're sick.

If you don't have health insurance or a regular doctor, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip for a list of low-cost immunization clinics.

Learn More

Visit the following websites to access videos, flyers and additional information about whooping cough.

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health:
www.ph.lacounty.gov/ip/DiseaseSpecific/Pertussis.htm
- California Department of Public Health:
www.getimmunizedca.org

Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

Protect Your Family From Whooping Cough



What is whooping cough?

Whooping cough (also known as pertussis) is a respiratory disease that can be spread when a person coughs or sneezes. It can cause serious illness, especially in infants under 6 months of age, which can lead to hospitalization and even death.



What are the signs and symptoms of whooping cough?

Whooping cough usually starts off like a cold, and gets worse over time.

Early symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold-like symptoms such as runny nose, stuffy nose, sneezing, and/or watery eyes • A mild, occasional cough • A low-grade fever • Pauses in breathing (apnea) in some infants
Late symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fits of severe coughing, often followed by vomiting • A “whoop” sound that follows the cough in many children and adults • Breathing problems

The symptoms of whooping cough can be missed in infants and can get serious fast. Parents should bring their infant to see a doctor if he or she has any respiratory problems.

How is whooping cough treated?

It’s important to treat whooping cough early. It can be treated using antibiotics. Infants are typically treated in a hospital because they’re more likely to have serious complications.

What are the complications of whooping cough?

For Infants (especially under 6 months of age)	For Adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear infections • Pneumonia • Dehydration • Seizures • Brain damage • Slow or stopped breathing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdominal hernias • Broken or cracked ribs • Broken blood vessels of the skin or eyes • Swollen face

How can you prevent whooping cough?

The best way to prevent whooping cough is to get vaccinated.

- Children should receive a DTaP vaccine at 2, 4, and 6 months; between 15-18 months of age; and at 4-6 years of age.
- Pre-teens (11-12 years old), as well as teens and adults under the age of 65 years who have not received a previous dose, should get the booster shot called Tdap because vaccine protection fades over time.
- Pregnant women should get a Tdap dose each time that they are pregnant.
- Parents and others who care for young infants, including adults over the age of 65 years, should get a Tdap shot to protect themselves and the infant, if they not previously received a Tdap dose.

Which whooping cough vaccines are required for childcare and school entry?

In California, children entering or transferring into school or entering childcare must show proof that they were vaccinated against whooping cough.

- Children entering childcare or kindergarten, as well as transfer students, must show proof of appropriate DTaP or DTP doses.
- All students entering 7th grade must show proof of one dose of Tdap vaccine.

Children may be exempted from these requirements for medical, religious or philosophical reasons.