

PERTUSSIS



(WHOOPIING COUGH)

Protect Yourself, Protect Your Family

WHAT IS WHOOPING COUGH OR PERTUSSIS?

Whooping cough and pertussis are both names for the same disease. It is an infection of the throat and lungs. Whooping cough is very contagious, which means it can spread easily from person to person through coughing or sneezing.

Whooping cough is very serious for babies 12 months old and younger. Babies less than 2 months old need more protection because they are too young to get a whooping cough shot (vaccine). Babies with whooping cough can get very sick and may be hospitalized.

Whooping cough is easily spread from person to person and can be treated with medication. If your child has whooping cough, he or she will be asked to stay home from school for 5 days so that medications can work.

Getting your children's whooping cough shots is the best way to prevent the spread of whooping cough in your family and in your schools.

SIGNS OF WHOOPING COUGH

- Whooping cough usually starts like a cold with runny nose, sneezing and sometimes a low fever. This is followed by a severe cough that can last for weeks to months.
- During coughing attacks, babies and children may gag, gasp or have trouble breathing in, making the high-pitched "whooping" sound. Sometimes heavy coughing can cause vomiting.

GET YOUR SHOT

Although it is possible to get whooping cough if you have had all your shots, **the chances are MUCH LOWER if you are UP TO DATE on your shots.**

The vaccine to help prevent whooping cough in children under 6 years old is called DTaP. Children get several doses of this vaccine. These are given at: 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15-18 months and 4-6 years.

At 11-12 years, children should get a Tdap shot. Tdap is the whooping cough vaccine for older children and adults.

By protecting yourself with the vaccine, you are also protecting everyone around you. Ask your health care provider if you and your children have all the shots you need.

WHO TO CALL

For more information about whooping cough or shots, call your health care provider or Washington County Public Health at **503-846-3594**.