

Pertussis is caused by bacteria that spread easily from one person to another. Before there was a vaccine for pertussis, the disease killed many children in the U.S.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms start 5-10 days after being around a person who is sick with pertussis. Early symptoms are like a cold lasting 1 to 2 weeks, and include:

- runny nose
- low fever
- cough that slowly gets worse
- pauses in breathing in infants

Over time the sick person begins to have bad coughing fits. The person may make a high pitched “whooping” sound as they try to catch their breath after coughing. Later symptoms may last 2 to 10 weeks and can include:

- coughing fits
- throwing up (vomiting)
- tiredness after coughing fits

COMPLICATIONS

Pertussis is a serious illness for infants and young children who don’t have all of their pertussis vaccinations. Over half of all infants under one year of age who get pertussis have to go to the hospital. Of those, 1 or 2 out of 100 will die.

TREATMENT

Antibiotics given early in the illness help to prevent the worst symptoms. Antibiotics are also given to people who live or spend time with the sick person (like childcare providers and grandparents) so they won’t get sick.

HOW IT SPREADS

Pertussis spreads easily from one person to another when an infected person coughs or sneezes and others who are nearby breathe in the germs.

HOW TO PREVENT PERTUSSIS—READ THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS PAGE

how to prevent

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Vaccination

The best way to prevent pertussis is through vaccination. DTaP and Tdap vaccines protect against pertussis, diphtheria and tetanus.

DTaP is for children younger than 7 years of age. Children need 5 doses of DTaP (at 2, 4, 6, 15-18 months and at 4-6 years).

Tdap is for older children and adults. In North Carolina, Tdap is required for children entering 7th grade. Older teens and adults through 64 years of age should also get one dose of Tdap. Women should get a Tdap vaccine each time they are pregnant. Adults 65 and older who spend time with an infant and have not already had a Tdap vaccine should also get one dose.

Practice Good Health Manners

Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. Wash hands after throwing the tissue away (see below).

Handwashing

Wash hands often, especially if you are sick.

MORE ABOUT HANDWASHING

How to Wash



1. Wet



2. Soap



3. Scrub 15 –20 seconds



4. Rinse



5. Dry



6. Use towel to turn off faucet

WHEN TO WASH

- Before and after eating
- Before, during and after making and touching food
- After using the bathroom or helping a child use the bathroom
- After changing or checking a diaper
- After coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose and after wiping a child's nose
- After touching blood or body fluids (urine, feces, vomit, etc)
- After touching animals or their waste
- After touching trash
- After touching money
- Whenever hands look, feel or smell dirty

Washing hands is the best way to prevent the spread of many illnesses. No soap and water? Use a hand sanitizer made with alcohol (follow package directions) – then wash with soap and water as soon as you can.