

Whooping Cough: What You Need to Know



What Is Whooping Cough?

- Whooping cough (also called pertussis) causes coughing fits that make it hard to breathe.
- It spreads easily when someone with the disease coughs or sneezes.
- It can kill young babies.

Starts Like a Cold. Gets Worse Fast.

Early Symptoms

Often, symptoms start like a common cold:

- runny nose
- sneezing
- low or no fever
- mild cough

Symptoms After 1-2 Weeks

Bad coughing attacks may lead to:

- vomiting
- a red or blue face
- broken ribs
- problems breathing
- extreme tiredness
- sweating spells

Symptoms can last for months.

Babies Are Most at Risk

Infants younger than 6 months old often do not have a typical cough. In the early stages, infants may:

- gasp or gag
- stop breathing
- get very tired
- have seizures

Symptoms can get worse very fast. Often, babies need to go to the hospital for care.

Treat Whooping Cough Early

Call Your Doctor If You or a Family Member:

- Are around someone who has whooping cough or a bad cough.
- Have any symptoms of whooping cough.

Your Doctor May Prescribe an Antibiotic Medicine to:

- Keep you from getting sicker (if taken early).
- Prevent others from getting sick.

If You Have Whooping Cough:

- Stay home. Avoid contact with others until you have finished treatment.
- If you are caring for an infant, ask a healthy adult to feed, hold, and care for your baby.

Prevention is Key

- DTaP doses are recommended at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15 months, and 4-6 years of age.
- Tdap is recommended for everyone 11 years and older.
- To protect their newborn babies, pregnant women need a Tdap shot during their third trimester of pregnancy, even if they got it before pregnancy.
- Women need a Tdap shot each time they are pregnant.

Talk with your doctor about whooping cough shots for you and your family.



"We were beyond stunned. The disease just moved so fast. Only after Brady was gone was he diagnosed with whooping cough." —Brady's Parents

Read more at www.ShotByShot.org/pertussis/bradys-story

