

Stop Pertussis.

Pregnant Women and Their Babies Rely on You.



Immunize with Every Pregnancy

Newborns can die from pertussis. Infants most often contract pertussis from family members.

Pregnant women should get a pertussis booster shot (Tdap) with every pregnancy *irrespective* of their prior history of receiving Tdap.

Immunize between 27 and 36 weeks gestation (at the earliest opportunity during this window) to maximize the transfer of maternal antibody to the infant.

Tdap should also be given:

- to all adolescents and adults who have not received Tdap.
- after giving birth, before hospital discharge, to women who have not received Tdap (even if breastfeeding).
- to other family members and close contacts of infants who have not received Tdap, ideally at least 2 weeks prior to contact with the baby.

Think Pertussis

- Pertussis is often misdiagnosed. It starts like a cold with runny nose and cough.
- Typically, after 1-2 weeks, symptoms in adults progress to severe coughing attacks that may include:
 - post-tussive vomiting
 - a high-pitched “whoop”
 - sweating episodes, gagging, choking sensation
 - complications, such as broken ribs or pneumonia.
- Pertussis immunity wanes, so it is possible to get pertussis even with a history of vaccination or disease.

Test for Pertussis

If your patient has pertussis-like symptoms (especially in the 3rd trimester), promptly obtain a [nasal aspirate](#) (preferred specimen) or nasopharyngeal swab for PCR and/or culture.

Treat Pertussis, Reduce Transmission

- Antibiotics stop transmission, and if given early, may reduce pertussis severity. Erythromycin or Azithromycin are the preferred antibiotics for pertussis treatment or post-exposure prophylaxis during pregnancy.
- If your pregnant patient is exposed to pertussis, particularly in her 3rd trimester, prophylactic antibiotic therapy is recommended to protect her and the newborn.
- If she has pertussis, especially near-term or at delivery, treat her with antibiotics, and ensure that her newborn and household contacts receive prophylactic antibiotic therapy.
- Place new mothers with pertussis on droplet precautions during their hospitalization for delivery or until they have received 5 days of a full course of antibiotics. However, if both mother and infant are receiving antibiotic treatment, it is not necessary to isolate the baby from the mother, and breastfeeding is encouraged.



Dylan's Story

I caught pertussis in my 9th month of pregnancy. Two weeks after giving birth, my son Dylan died of pertussis that he caught from me. My doctor thought it was just a cold. – Mariah, Dylan's Mom (Watch her full story on [ShotbyShot.org](#))

For more information, visit www.pregnancyshotsca.org

