**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 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](http://www.pregnancyshotsca.org)