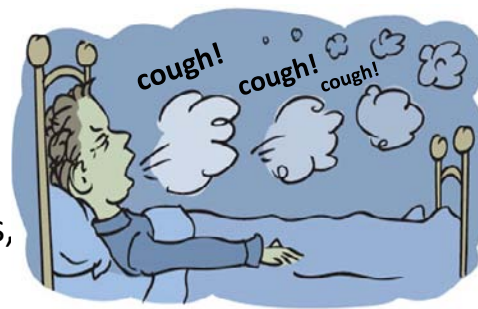


Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

What is Pertussis (whooping cough)?

Pertussis is a serious disease caused by bacteria. It starts out like a normal cold, but can become much worse. It can cause severe coughing that interferes with eating, drinking, and breathing. Pertussis can lead to pneumonia, convulsions, inflammation of the brain and sometimes death.



Who can get Pertussis?

Pertussis can occur in all ages. It is most common in infants less than 1 year of age. While it may leave adults feeling worn-out and sick, it can be very dangerous for babies.

How is Pertussis spread?

People with Pertussis usually spread the disease by coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others, who then breathe in the Pertussis bacteria.

Many infants who get Pertussis are infected by older siblings, parents or other caregivers who might not even know they have the disease.

What are the symptoms of Pertussis?

- Pertussis symptoms can be different depending on how old you are or if you have been vaccinated.
- Pertussis usually starts with cold-like symptoms maybe mild cough, but not every runny nose is Pertussis.
- Pertussis is often not diagnosed until the cough develops into coughing fits. The coughing fits are a series of violent coughs during which the person struggles to breathe.
- People with Pertussis often cough violently and rapidly, until the air is gone from their lungs and they are forced to inhale with a loud “whooping” sound.

What can you do?

- Make sure you and your family are up to date with the Pertussis vaccines (DTaP for infants/children and Tdap for adolescents and adults)*
 - *No serious reactions have been associated with DTaP or Tdap and getting these vaccines is much **SAFER** than getting a dangerous disease like Pertussis.
- If you are pregnant, ask your health care provider if your immunizations are up to date. The CDC recommends pregnant women get the pertussis vaccine immediately after giving birth.
- Ask your doctor about the adolescent/adult Pertussis booster vaccine (Tdap) to help prevent and control for Pertussis.

For more information please contact

Your personal health care provider **OR**

The Edison Public Health Nurses at (732) 248-7286



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