



Whooping Cough*

What is Whooping Cough?

Pertussis, also called whooping cough, is a serious disease that affects the lungs. It is caused by bacteria that is easily spread from person to person in the air. Babies who get whooping cough get very sick. They can even die. Vaccinations (shots) are the best type of protection.

Whooping Cough Symptoms

Whooping cough starts like the common cold, with a runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, mild cough, or fever. After 1 to 2 weeks, whooping cough causes severe coughing fits. These coughing fits force the air out of the lungs. People make a loud "whooping" sound when they are able to breathe again. Babies with whooping cough often don't cough at all. Instead, it can cause them to stop breathing.

Get Protected

There are three main ways babies and young children get protected against whooping cough:

- When vaccine antibodies are passed from mother to baby in the third trimester of pregnancy.
- By having family and caregivers be up-to-date with their whooping cough vaccine.
- Having your baby get all the recommended doses of the whooping cough vaccine. Talk to your baby's doctor about the number and frequency of shots for your child.



Pregnant Women Need the Whooping Cough Vaccine

Pregnant women can help protect their babies by getting the whooping cough vaccine at the start of the third trimester. This early protection is important because **newborns can't get their first shot until 2 months of age.**

*Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control parent fact sheet "Whooping Cough and the Vaccine (Shot) to Prevent It"

For information in your language or in another format,
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