



Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

Your child may have been exposed to this illness on _____.
Date(s)

Please check your child for symptoms through _____.
Date

If your child has symptoms, please contact your child's healthcare provider.

If my child becomes sick, when can they return to school or child care?

Children with Whooping Cough may not return until they have taken at least **5 days** of antibiotics. If a child with Whooping Cough did not receive antibiotics, they may not return to school until 21 days after the cough started.

Whooping Cough is an illness caused by bacteria.

At first, symptoms are:

- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Low grade fever (less than 100.4 F)
- Cough

After 1 to 2 weeks, the symptoms get worse. Thick mucus builds in the throat and can cause:

- Long coughing attacks
- The face may turn red or blue face when a child is not getting enough oxygen
- In young children you might hear a “whoop” sound when they breathe in air after coughing
- Vomiting after a coughing attack
- Periods of not breathing at all, especially in infants
- Extreme tiredness

A person usually gets sick 7 to 10 days after they have had contact with a sick person, but it can take as long as 21 days. Whooping Cough **can be a serious illness or fatal for infants** (younger than 1 year of age).

What can I do now?

Watch your child for symptoms. If your child has a cough that does not resolve, discuss this notice and your child's symptoms with the health care provider. **All infants (younger than 1 year of age), pregnant persons, and household members who are in contact with an ill individual should talk to their health care provider about taking antibiotics to prevent getting sick.**

If your child gets sick, prevent others from getting ill by:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Put used tissues in the waste basket.
- Wash hands frequently.

How is Whooping Cough spread?

- Coughing and sneezing
- Touching items that have been touched with fluid from a sick person.
- The bacteria spreads the most during the first 2 weeks a person is sick, and can be spread as long as 3 weeks.

Any person who is sick should avoid taking care of or spending time with pregnant persons, infants or young children until they have taken antibiotics for at least 5 days, or if they did not take antibiotics, do not spend time with these individuals until it has been 21 days since the cough started.

Whooping cough may be prevented by the vaccine. **It is most effective during the three years after vaccination, and then immunity from the vaccine wanes or decreases.** Vaccination can reduce the severity and length of time a person is sick. **To protect infants, pregnant persons should receive the Tdap vaccine between 27 to 36 weeks of pregnancy.**