

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Protecting Your Child: What Every Parent Should Know



Infants can't get their first shot until 2 months, so **we rely on community protection.**



The Vaccine

DTaP and Tdap (Pertussis component)

- Whole-cell DTP introduced in 1940s.
- Acellular DTaP introduced in 1990s. The vaccine was updated to reduce risk of side effects (high fever causing seizures).

How it works:

- Contains **purified antigens** to stimulate protection without using the whole bacteria.

Dosage:

- 5 doses from 2 months to 6 years
 - Tdap booster is recommended at ages 11-12 and during every pregnancy.



The DTaP vaccine is why whooping cough **deaths in babies have dropped sharply** in the U.S.

What is Pertussis (Whooping Cough)?



A serious respiratory infection causing **uncontrollable coughing**, gasping for air, and vomiting after coughing fits. Coughing can last for weeks or months.

Pertussis can cause **pneumonia, seizures, brain damage**, and death especially in babies.

Who's most vulnerable? Infants under six months and those not yet fully vaccinated. Whooping cough disease surges every 3-5 years.

Is the Vaccine Safe? Yes.

- DTaP is **safer than ever**, with fewer side effects than earlier versions.
- Large-scale studies show **no link to autism** or developmental issues.
- Reviewed continually by independent safety panels.

Support & Guidance

Talk to your pediatrician, family doctor, or obstetric provider (if pregnant) as they know your child's health and vaccine schedule best.

Trusted Resources: [AAP HealthyChildren.org](https://www.aap.org/healthychildren)

Alternatives?

- Pertussis is **highly contagious and very dangerous**, especially to newborns.
- Delaying vaccines creates unnecessary risk.
- Pregnant women should get Tdap **every pregnancy** to protect newborns..



We're in this together. Protect your baby with confidence, not fear. We're here to answer your questions, support your decisions, and celebrate the protection you give your family.

