

FACT SHEET

PERTUSSIS

aka WHOOPING COUGH

Pertussis is a **highly infectious disease, regardless of the severity of symptoms** and is easily spread. It is also known as “whooping cough” because of the “whooping” sound that is made when gasping for air after a fit of coughing.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Persistent coughing, generally at night time, almost always greater than 1 week; after 2 weeks cough may develop “whoop” and vomiting may occur after a spell
- Fever is uncommon, if present is low-grade
- Fatigue & Weakness are mild, appears well between coughing spells
- Stuffy or runny nose common early on

Infectious period is before onset of cough to 21 days after cough starts. Most catching after cough starts.

Treatment: The best way to treat pertussis is through early treatment with antibiotics. Treatment after three weeks of illness is unlikely to help because the bacteria are gone from your body, even though you usually will still have symptoms. This is because the bacteria have already done damage to your body.

Best Protection Measures:

- Be up-to-date on your shots
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Put your used tissue in the waste basket
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub

If you suspect you have Whooping Cough, or have been exposed to Whooping Cough it is important to seek treatment with your medical provider.

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