

Pertussis (whooping cough) Facts For Parents & Caregivers

There is a pertussis outbreak in Washtenaw County.
There were 233 cases in 2010 (compared to 23 in 2008 and 84 in 2009).

Risk

- Pertussis is a very contagious disease of the respiratory tract.
- Babies are most at risk due to incomplete DTaP vaccine series and their still developing respiratory system. Many babies who contract Pertussis will be hospitalized.
- Pertussis can cause severe coughing and difficulty breathing in children and adults.

Get vaccinated

- Vaccination is especially important for new parents and anyone who is around babies. Pertussis is often spread to babies from teens and adults who don't realize they have it.
- Check your child's vaccination records. Make sure he or she is vaccinated against pertussis.
- Children 10 years and older and adults may need a pertussis booster. The Tdap vaccine is recommended for everyone 10 to 64 years of age.
- Vaccination is available at the health department or from your health care provider.

Symptoms

- Symptoms of pertussis include low grade fever, runny nose and cough that becomes worse after 1-2 weeks. Coughing may last a month or more.
- Many teens and adults with pertussis do not make the classic "whooping" sound when coughing.
- Call your health care provider if a cough lasts longer than two weeks, there is vomiting after coughing, respiratory problems or any unusual cough.
- Call your healthcare provider if your baby has any of the following: cough with whoop, vomiting after cough, difficulty breathing or any unusual cough.

Treatment

- Antibiotics are used to treat pertussis.
- Persons treated for pertussis should remain home for 5 days while they take antibiotics.
- Antibiotics are also recommended for other members of the household to prevent additional illness.