

Whooping Cough

What is whooping cough?

- It is a highly contagious bacterial, respiratory infection that spreads from person to person
- It is also known as Pertussis
- It frequently includes a cough which lasts two weeks or more and becomes severe and persistent
- The cough is often accompanied by a whooping sound, especially in children
- The cough may be minimal in some individuals, especially adults, but is persistent

Can it be prevented?

- Yes, there is a vaccine that is effective in preventing whooping cough
- The vaccine has been used for years and is safe
- The vaccine is first given at 2 months of age and offers protection after 4 doses
- School children need boosters before starting kindergarten and middle school and adults should substitute one dose of Tdap in place of their regular Tetanus booster

Who is most at risk for serious illness?

- Young children, particularly those under the age of 1 year
- Caregivers and family members in close contact with young children can carry the disease to those who have not been fully vaccinated

How can we protect infants?

- Caregivers with close contact with very young children can get a booster vaccination
- Caregivers include parents, siblings, relatives and others who provide daily care

Where can adults obtain a vaccine booster?

- Most primary care offices can provide this vaccination to adults
- Parents may ask if their infant's physician offers this vaccine to adults

Why is whooping cough a concern now?

- California has had 5 deaths of infants statewide between January and June of 2010
- The number of 2010 cases may reach a 50 year high