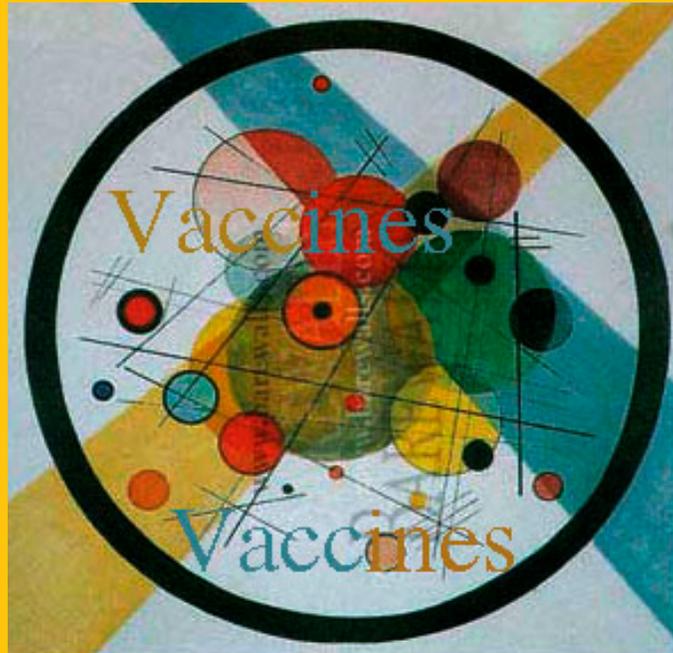


HOW TO BE **SAFE** FROM

PERTUSSIS

(WHOOPIING COUGH)



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Pertussis (whooping cough) can occur at any age. If pertussis is circulating in the community, everyone is at risk. Pertussis is a very contagious disease, caused by a type of bacteria called *Bordetella pertussis*. People with pertussis usually spread the disease by coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others, who then breathe in the pertussis bacteria.

Among vaccine-preventable diseases this is one of the most commonly occurring ones in the United States. Since the 1980s, there's been a dramatic increase in the number of cases, especially among teens (10–19 years of age) and babies less than 5 months of age. Many infants who get pertussis are infected by older siblings or parents who might not even know they have the disease. There have been 88 cases of whooping cough in San Diego County this year. In 2008, there were 51.

The Pertussis disease starts like the common cold, with runny nose or congestion, sneezing, and maybe mild cough or fever. After 1–2 weeks, severe coughing begins. The person will cough violently and rapidly, over and over, until the air is gone from their lungs and they're forced to inhale with a loud "whooping" sound.

Pertussis can cause life-threatening complications, the most common is pneumonia, (lung infection). In adolescents and adults, rib fractures and difficulty sleeping may occur. About 1 in 250 people who become infected with pertussis develop a brain disorder called encephalopathy. And in rarer cases, can be deadly.

Pertussis is worse for very young children; more than half of infants less than 1 year of age who get the disease must be hospitalized. About 1 in 10 children with pertussis get pneumonia, and about 1 in 50 will have convulsions.

The best way to prevent pertussis is to get vaccinated. Families can also help protect infants and grandparents by keeping them away as much as possible from anyone who has cold symptoms or is coughing.



U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Sebelius covering her cough

Pertussis can occur at any age, but older adults, infants and especially in infants who are too young to be fully vaccinated. Young children vaccine schedule recommends five shots. Because the vaccine protection from the childhood vaccine fades over time, adolescents and adults need to be revaccinated. Adolescent and adult vaccination is especially important for families with new infants.

In the U.S., the recommended pertussis vaccine for children is called DTaP. This vaccine is a safe and protects children against three diseases: diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis. For maximum protection against pertussis, children need five DTaP shots. The first three shots are given at 2, 4, and 6 months of age. The fourth shot is given between 15 and 18 months of age, and a fifth shot is given when a child enters school, at 4–6 years of age.

Vaccine protection for pertussis, tetanus, and diphtheria can fade with time. Pre-teens going to the doctor for their regular check-up at age 11 or 12 years should get a dose of Tdap.

Adults who didn't get Tdap as a pre-teen or teen should get one dose of Tdap instead of the Td booster. Adults should talk to a healthcare provider about what's best for their specific situation.

For more information about whooping cough vaccines, please call the HHSA Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661, or visit the Web site at www.sdiz.org.

Cover your Cough

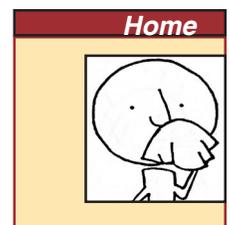
The tiny droplets expelled during coughing and sneezing can infect someone else. Cover Your Cough by using a tissue or shirt sleeve if a tissue is not available.



Avoid touching the mouth, nose and eyes with hands.



Frequent hand washing also can prevent the spread of colds and flu. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with plenty of soap and warm water. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based gel or wipes.



If you're sick with a cold or the flu, stay home. Avoid close contact with those who are sick. Conversely, those who have a cold or flu should not mingle with others. The flu typically lasts a week to 10 days.