

WHOOPING COUGH (PERTUSSIS)



WHAT IS WHOOPING COUGH?

- Whooping cough (pertussis) is an infection caused by bacteria.
- It can be prevented by early childhood immunization.
- The infection usually begins with a runny nose and cough. Soon, the cough becomes more frequent and severe. After a coughing attack, the child may give a loud whoop when breathing in, which is why the infection is called whooping cough. A person may vomit with the attack.
- A person is usually sick for 6 to 10 weeks.
- The disease is most severe in infants less than 1 year of age.
- Can be treated with antibiotics.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

- The germs are spread through the air.
- People with whooping cough can spread germs from the time they get the infection; until three weeks after the coughing attack began.
- Medication can help prevent the infection from spreading to others and may help reduce the symptoms.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

- **Whooping cough can be prevented by immunization.** Check you/your child's immunization record to ensure it is up-to-date.
- Watch for signs of whooping cough.
- If you/your child has whooping cough and has been put on antibiotics, you / your child should remain at home until the antibiotic has been taken for at least five days.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or visit www.healthunit.org

Source: Canadian Paediatric Society