

Whooping cough outbreaks continue to occur and can be dangerous for you and your family.

What is whooping cough?

Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, is a potentially serious, highly contagious respiratory disease that can affect people of all ages.

How prevalent is whooping cough today?

In recent years, there have been outbreaks of whooping cough in the United States, including approximately 33,000 cases in 2014 and approximately 18,000 cases in 2015.

How can I help protect myself and my loved ones?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the best way to help prevent whooping cough is to get vaccinated. Parents can also help protect infants by keeping them away from anyone who has cold symptoms or is coughing.

What are the symptoms of whooping cough?

Early symptoms of whooping cough can resemble those of a cold. In fact, many people who spread it may not know they have it; however, they are still contagious. Early symptoms commonly include: runny nose; low-grade fever; mild and occasional cough.

After a week or two, the cough can worsen due to thick mucus that accumulates inside airways. This can result in bursts of numerous, rapid coughs. Individuals may turn blue from a lack of oxygen, and children and infants especially may appear very ill, may vomit, and may be exhausted from the coughing.

For some people, a “whoop” sound occurs in between coughing fits as they try to quickly take in deep breaths. Infants younger than 6 months of age may not have the strength to have a “whoop,” but they do have coughing fits.

How do people get whooping cough?

Whooping cough usually spreads when a person who has the bacteria coughs or sneezes while in close contact with others. Whooping cough is known to spread within households. Relatives of newborns, including parents, grandparents, and older siblings, can spread whooping cough. In a recent study, when a source of infection could be identified, 85% of infants who were diagnosed with whooping cough were found to have contracted it from a member of their immediate or extended family.

What are the effects of contracting whooping cough?

In adults, whooping cough can last several months. In a clinical study, 66% of adults infected with whooping cough required two or more medical visits during their illness. In some adults, coughing fits can lead to complications such as difficulty sleeping, urinary incontinence, or pneumonia.

Whooping cough can cause serious and even life-threatening complications in infants and young children, especially those who are not fully vaccinated. Adults, adolescents, and children partially protected by the vaccine may become infected but may have milder disease than infants and young children.

Complications in infants can include hospitalization, pneumonia, seizures, brain disorders, and, in very rare cases, death.

Who should get vaccinated?

Adults: A one-time booster vaccination for all adults 19 years of age and older who have not received a previous dose of Tdap vaccine.

Adolescents: A one-time booster vaccination at 11-18 years of age, with preferred administration at 11-12 years of age.

Infants and children: Five vaccinations are recommended — at 2, 4, and 6 months of age; at 15-18 months of age; and at 4-6 years of age.

Ask your healthcare professional or pharmacist about whooping cough vaccination today.

For more information, visit www.bigbadcough.com

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