

Whooping Cough (Pertussis)



Whooping cough is a contagious illness that can occur at any age but is most commonly seen in young children. Doctors are also treating more teenagers with whooping cough. The illness can be very serious in infants and youngsters. It is highly recommended your child be vaccinated, particularly those under the age of seven. It is imperative any child with a chronic cardiac or respiratory condition be immunized completely. The full immunization treatment will give your child 80–90 percent protection from the illness. There is a very small chance children who have been vaccinated might still get whooping cough. However, children who have been vaccinated will not get as sick as those children who have not been vaccinated.

A Contagious Disease

Whooping cough involves severe coughing spells that can last from six to 10 weeks.

- Develops six–20 days after exposure to whooping cough
- Transmitted by sneezing and coughing
- Antibiotics decrease the chance of transmitting the disease to others.

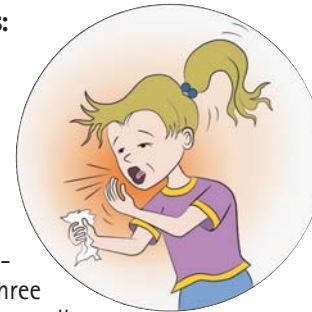


Symptoms occur in three stages:

Weeks one–two:

- Runny nose
- Dry cough
- Low-grade fever

Your child is contagious during this stage and, if not treated with antibiotics, is considered contagious for three weeks from the start of the coughing spells.



Weeks two–six:

- Severe coughing followed by short intake of breath creating "whoop" sound
- Vomits often after coughing spell
- Flushed or bluish face after coughing spell

Weeks seven–15:

- Recovery period; coughing is less severe and less frequent
- Other types of respiratory tract infections, such as colds, may briefly be more severe

When to see a doctor

In order to have your child correctly diagnosed and to begin the proper treatment, you should consult your doctor:

- when symptoms first appear
- if your child is less than one year old
- if your child turns blue during a coughing attack
- if your child is not drinking enough or shows signs of dehydration
- if your child has trouble breathing

If your child is less than one year old he may need to be admitted to the hospital for closer observation.

Treatment at home

- If using antibiotics keep your child from other children for five days
- If not using antibiotics keep your child from other children for three weeks
- Give your child plenty of fluids
- Give Tempra or Tylenol (acetaminophen) for fever
- To help your child breathe, raise his head, or put your infant in an infant seat
- Watch for any change in face colour (blue flush when coughing)

**L'Hôpital de Montréal pour enfants
The Montreal Children's Hospital**



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IMPORTANT : PLEASE READ

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