



ALLIANCE-MIDMED MEDICAL SCHEME

WHOOPING COUGH (PERTUSSIS)

Whooping Cough is a highly contagious disease caused by bacteria. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, bacteria are released. You get whooping cough when you breathe in these bacteria or if you touch a surface (e.g. unwashed hand) that is covered with the bacteria.

WHO CAN GET IT?

Anyone can get whooping cough if exposed to the bacteria.

However, risk of getting sick, and of having the illness become severe, is higher in those with decreased immunity such as:

- Not vaccinated
- Never had whooping cough
- HIV
- Diabetic
- Chronic lung disease

Whooping cough can be deadly in infants and young children!

PREVENTION

Vaccination prevents hundreds of thousands of deaths!

The Department of Health schedule mandates vaccines at:

6, 10 and 14 weeks with a booster at 18 months

Pregnant women (16-38 weeks) should be vaccinated to prevent the illness in babies too young to be vaccinated.

Take precautions, such as using correct masks and gloves, when around someone with whooping cough to prevent exposure to the bacteria.

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

Go to your doctor or nearest clinic immediately when you or your child have any of the following:

- Unfamiliar cough that doesn't go away
- Symptoms of whooping cough
- Contact with someone who has whooping cough, even if you both have been vaccinated

Infants (less than 6 months) - Any breathing difficulties in this age group should be taken straight away to doctor.

SHARING INFORMATION

If you have whooping cough, let people that you have been in close contact with know so they can also receive antibiotics.

Whooping cough is a community health risk, the department of health must be notified of all cases by your doctor.

NB: As this illness is so contagious, stay off school or work and avoid contact with young children, until your doctor says it is safe.

TREATMENT

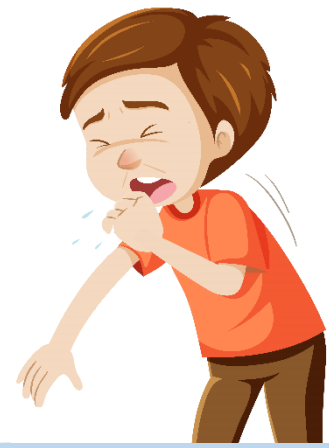
Admission to hospital may be necessary for those with severe disease and those younger than 6 months.

Antibiotics are the treatment for this illness as it is caused by bacteria.

Early treatment may reduce symptom severity, speed up recovery time, and prevent people from transmitting the bacteria.

Antibiotics are also used in the late stages of the infection to prevent the bacteria from spreading to others. While antibiotics can help treat the infection, they don't prevent or treat the cough itself.

Cough medicines are not recommended — they have no effect on whooping cough symptoms and may cause harmful side effects for infants and small children.



SYMPTOMS

Incubation Period: Symptoms generally appear 7-10 days after infection.

Untreated patients may be contagious for 3 weeks or more following onset of the cough.

Any breathing difficulties in infants may indicate whooping cough.

Stage 1 (lasts approx. 1-2 weeks):

- Runny nose
- Teary eyes
- Congestion
- Mild cough
- Hacking night cough

Stage 2 (lasts approx. 1 week):

- Sudden bursts of violent, uncontrollable, wet (stringy mucous) coughing
- Coughing may be followed by:
 - "Whoop" sound when catching breath - more common in young children than adults
 - Vomiting
 - Difficulty breathing for a few seconds

Stage 3 (lasts approx. 2-3 weeks; 2-5 weeks in children):

- Decreasing symptoms
- Cough may still be present

SELF-CARE

Ensure you hydrate, rest, and have good hand hygiene.

Eat smaller meals to avoid vomiting.

Avoid coughing triggers (e.g. smoke).

Use Paracetamol or Ibuprofen for symptoms.

A humidifier or warm bath or shower may help clear the lungs and make breathing easier.



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