

# Whooping Cough: What You Need to Know



## What Is Whooping Cough?

- Whooping cough (also called pertussis) causes coughing fits that make it hard to breathe.
- It spreads easily when someone with the disease coughs or sneezes.
- It can kill young babies.

## Starts Like a Cold. Gets Worse Fast.

### Early Symptoms

Often, symptoms start like a common cold:

- runny nose
- sneezing
- low or no fever
- mild cough

### Symptoms After 1-2 Weeks

Bad coughing attacks may lead to:

- vomiting
- a red or blue face
- broken ribs
- problems breathing
- extreme tiredness
- sweating spells

Symptoms can last for months.

## Babies Are Most at Risk

Infants younger than 6 months old often do not have a typical cough. In the early stages, infants may:

- gasp or gag
- stop breathing
- get very tired
- have seizures

Symptoms can get worse very fast. Often, babies need to go to the hospital for care.

## Treat Whooping Cough Early

### Call Your Doctor If You or a Family Member:

- Are around someone who has whooping cough or a bad cough.
- Have any symptoms of whooping cough.

### Your Doctor May Prescribe an Antibiotic Medicine to:

- Keep you from getting sicker (if taken early).
- Prevent others from getting sick.

### If You Have Whooping Cough:

- Stay home. Avoid contact with others until you have finished treatment.
- If you are caring for an infant, ask a healthy adult to feed, hold, and care for your baby.

## Prevention is Key

- DTaP doses are recommended at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15 months, and 4-6 years of age.
- Tdap is recommended for everyone 11 years and older.
- To protect their newborn babies, pregnant women need a Tdap shot during their third trimester of pregnancy, even if they got it before pregnancy.
- Women need a Tdap shot each time they are pregnant.

## Talk with your doctor about whooping cough shots for you and your family.



*"We were beyond stunned. The disease just moved so fast. Only after Brady was gone was he diagnosed with whooping cough."* —Brady's Parents

Read more at [www.ShotByShot.org/pertussis/bradys-story](http://www.ShotByShot.org/pertussis/bradys-story)

