



## Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

Your child may have been exposed to this disease on \_\_\_\_\_.  
Date(s)

Please check your child for symptoms through \_\_\_\_\_.  
Date

*If your child has symptoms, please contact your child's healthcare provider.*

### **If my child has this disease, when can he or she return to school or child care?**

**Children with Whooping Cough may NOT return until they have taken at least 3 days of antibiotics.** If a child did not receive antibiotics or did not finish antibiotics, the child may NOT return to school until it has been 21 days since the cough started.

#### **Whooping Cough is an illness caused by bacteria.**

At first, symptoms are:

- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Low grade fever (less than 100.4 F)
- Cough

After one week, the symptoms get worse. Thick mucus builds in the throat and can cause:

- Long coughing attacks
- The face may turn red or blue face when a child is not getting enough oxygen
- In young children you might hear a "whoop" sound when they breathe in air after coughing
- Vomiting after a coughing attack
- Periods of not breathing at all, especially in infants
- Extreme tiredness

Symptoms usually start 7 to 10 days after a person is exposed, but it can take as long as 20 days. Whooping Cough **can be a serious illness or fatal for infants.**

#### **How is Whooping Cough spread?**

- Coughing and sneezing
- Touching items that have been touched with fluid from the nose of a sick person.

A sick person can spread the bacteria as long as 3 weeks after symptoms start. The bacteria spreads the most during the first 2 weeks a person is sick.

**Any person who is sick with whooping cough should avoid taking care of or spending time with infants or young children until they have taken antibiotics for 5 days, or they did not take antibiotics, wait until it has been 3 weeks since the cough started.**

#### **What can I do now?**

**Watch your child** for symptoms of this disease. Call your child's doctor or health care provider if your child is sick. If a person in your household is sick with whooping cough, it is recommended that all other members of your household get antibiotics to prevent getting sick. Contact your doctor to talk about this.

Whooping cough may be prevented by receiving the vaccine. It is very important for pregnant women and everyone in contact with an infant to be vaccinated against whooping cough.

#### **If your child gets sick, prevent others from getting ill by:**

- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue with you cough or sneeze.
- Putting used tissues in the waste basket.
- Washing hands frequently.