

Your child may have been exposed to:

Pertussis

Pertussis (whooping cough) can be a serious bacterial illness especially in young, unvaccinated children.

If you think your child has pertussis, tell your childcare provider or call the school.

Keep your child home from childcare and school until 5 days after your child starts taking antibiotics. If not treated, your child needs to stay home for 21 days after the cough started.

Antibiotics shorten the time a child with pertussis can give it to others (no longer contagious after 5 days of antibiotics).

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or call your local health department.

Symptoms

Your child may first have a runny nose, sneezing, mild cough, and possibly fever. After 1 or 2 weeks, your child may cough in explosive bursts. These coughing attacks can end in vomiting and/or in a high-pitched whooping sound. Coughing attacks occur most often at night. This may last up to three months.

If your child has been infected, it may take 4 to 21 days (usually 7 to 10 days) for symptoms to start.

Spread

- By coughing or sneezing.
- By touching contaminated hands, objects, or surfaces.

Contagious period

From the time of the first cold-like symptoms until 21 days after coughing begins **or** after taking 5 days of antibiotics.

Call your health care provider

If anyone in your home has:

- had a cough for 7 days or more. Lab tests may be done. Antibiotics will reduce the contagious period, but may do little to relieve your child's cough.
- been exposed to pertussis, especially if public health has recommended that antibiotics are needed because of an exposure.

Prevention

- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing. Use a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues in the trash.
- Wash hands after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the nose or mouth. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- In Minnesota, all children 2 months of age or older enrolled in childcare or school must be vaccinated against pertussis or have a legal exemption. Consider a pertussis booster vaccine for adolescents and adults (Tdap), especially for those who have close contact with young children. Pregnant women should get a Tdap during each pregnancy, preferably during their third trimester.