



Pertussis

Your child may have been exposed to pertussis. Pertussis (whooping cough) can be a serious bacterial illness that affects the lungs 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 or if it has been more than 3 weeks since your child's cough began. 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 spread 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.

Parent/Guardian information

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 5 days of taking antibiotics.

Call your health care provider

If anyone in your home has:

Pertussis

- 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 they develop symptoms.

In some instances, antibiotics may be given if exposed to pertussis.

Prevention

- 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 people should get a Tdap during each pregnancy, preferably during their third trimester.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing, using a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues in the trash right away.
- Wash hands often, but especially after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the nose or mouth. Your child may need help with handwashing.

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