



PERTUSSIS FACT SHEET

DEFINITION: Pertussis (Whooping Cough), is an acute bacterial infection of the respiratory tract. It may first appear as watery eyes and a runny nose with a mild occasional cough, much like a common cold.

Within one to two weeks, the cough worsens and gradually becomes a spasmodic, violent series of coughing episodes with gagging and trouble getting your breath between bouts of coughing.

Some coughing episodes can be followed by a characteristic crowing or inspiratory high-pitched “**whoop**” (thus the name whooping cough). The coughing frequently ends in coughing up clear, thick mucus, and /or vomiting. Symptoms may be milder in older children and adults, but with a cough that lasts longer.

HOW IT IS SPREAD: Pertussis is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes and others that are in close contact, and breathe in the infected droplets. The infected person can spread Pertussis for up to 3 weeks without treatment after the start of the coughing.

After exposure to Pertussis, symptoms may develop from 6 to 20 days later, but frequently occur within 7 to 10 days.

REMEMBER:

After 5 days of treatment with the proper antibiotic, the infected person is no longer contagious.

PREVENTION: Keeping your immunizations current. Other **preventative measures include:** good hygiene practices, covering your cough and good hand washing practices will prevent the spread of many germs.

Ask your Family Doctor or Health Department about Pertussis vaccine for adolescents and /or adults. The school nurse is also available to assist with vaccine questions and disease information.

EXPOSURE: If you have been exposed to Pertussis and develop symptoms, please consult your doctor. **Antibiotics** are the recommended treatment for Pertussis infection. The vaccine is considered a preventative.