

Pertussis (a.k.a. Whooping Cough)

What is Pertussis?

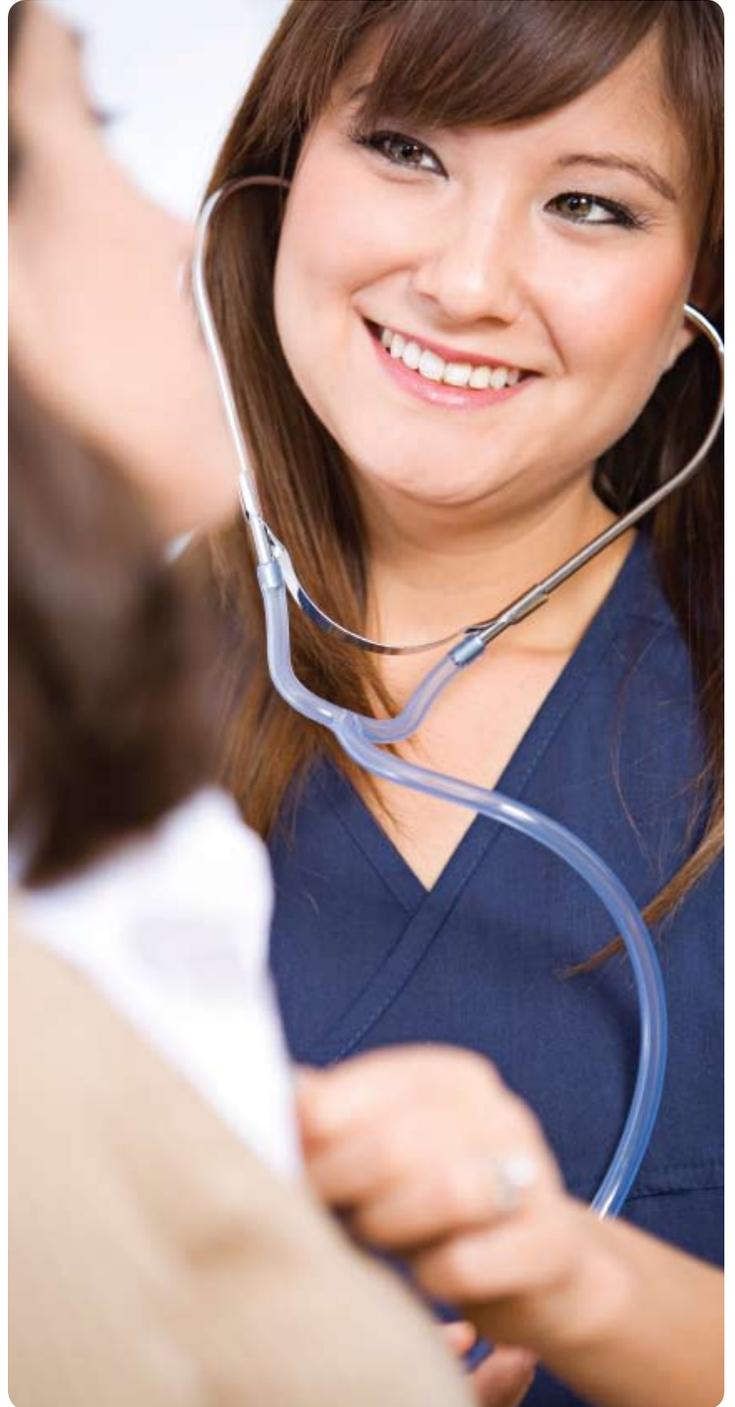
- Pertussis, or “whooping cough,” is a bad disease.
- When a sick person sneezes or coughs, tiny droplets move through the air, and the disease spreads from person to person.
- Pertussis can affect any person, but is worst for infants. Now that most children are immunized before they start school, most cases happen to teens and adults. It lasts about 6 weeks.

What are the Symptoms?

- The first signs of pertussis are like the common cold and start one week after contact with the bacteria. Bad coughing starts 10 to 12 days later.
- In children, the coughing can end with a “whoop” noise, which happens when the person tries to breathe. Bad coughing may make a person throw up or pass out. Infants often choke.
- Other pertussis symptoms are runny nose, light fever, and diarrhea.
- The only way to know for sure if you have pertussis is for your provider to send a sample of your mucus to a lab.

How is It Treated?

- If pertussis is caught early, antibiotics can treat it.
- Most people with pertussis are diagnosed too late, when antibiotics won’t help you feel better. But, taking them can still help make you less able to spread the disease to others.



For more information call Customer Service at **(415) 615-4555**.
Or visit **www.healthysanfrancisco.org**

Side Effects of Pertussis

Pertussis is a very bad disease. Older children and adults often get better, but infants have a high risk of death, and should be watched at all times. Some side effects of pertussis:

- Pneumonia
- Convulsions
- Seizure disorder (permanent)
- Nose bleeds
- Ear infections
- Brain damage from lack of oxygen
- Bleeding in the brain
- Mental retardation
- Slowed or stopped breathing
- Death



How Can I Prevent It?

- The best way to prevent pertussis is to get the vaccine.
- DTaP vaccine protects babies and children from pertussis. It should be given at ages 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15-18 months, and 4-6 years.
- The Tdap vaccine should be given around age 11 or 12, and every 10 years after that.
- During a pertussis outbreak, children under age 7 who have not gotten the vaccine should not go to school or big events. They should also stay away from people who might have pertussis until 14 days after the last case.
- Adults up to age 65 should get the vaccine.

Getting Help

Call your health provider if you or your child has signs of pertussis.

Call 911 or go to an ER if you or your child has any of these symptoms:

- Bluish skin color, which can mean a lack of oxygen
- Any time of not breathing
- Seizures
- High fever
- Nonstop throwing up

Source:

"Pertussis" PubMed Health, U.S. National Library of Medicine, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

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