

Pertussis Information

Pertussis is a bacterial infection of the lungs and spreads from person to person through moisture droplets in the air, probably from coughs or sneezes. A person with pertussis develops a severe cough that usually lasts four to six weeks or longer.

The number of reported pertussis (whooping cough) cases in Alabama in all ages has increased from 68 in 2008 to 315 in 2009. Already in the first six months of 2010 there have been 93 reported cases of pertussis.

Tdap Vaccine and Td Booster

To help provide protection:

- All students 11 and older entering the sixth grade in Alabama schools this school year must have a tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine. Each pupil 11 or older who enters the sixth grade will be required to have a new certificate of immunization. This is because of the change from tetanus-diphtheria (Td) to (Tdap) vaccine. The Tdap vaccine will protect adolescents from pertussis and keep them from spreading disease to siblings, other family members and other students. The Tdap school requirement will go up by one higher grade each school year. For example, Tdap will be required for students entering seventh grade in 2011-2012, eighth grade in 2012-2013, up through twelfth grade in 2016-2017.
- Adolescents who have already received a booster dose of Td are encouraged to receive a dose of Tdap. A five-year interval from the last Td dose is encouraged, but an interval as short as two years may be used if pertussis immunity is needed.
- All adults should receive a booster dose of Td every 10 years. Tdap is licensed for only one lifetime dose per person. Adults under age 65 who have never received a dose of Tdap should substitute it for their next booster dose.
- A dose of Tdap is recommended for adults under age 65 who expect to have close contact with an infant younger than 12 months of age.
- Healthcare workers under age 65 who have direct patient contact should receive a dose of Tdap.

- New mothers who have never received Tdap should get a dose as soon as possible after delivery. If vaccination is needed during pregnancy, Td is usually preferred over Tdap.
- Adolescents and adults who require a tetanus-containing vaccine as part of wound management should receive a dose of Tdap instead of Td if they have not previously received Tdap. If Tdap is not available or was previously administered, Td should be administered.

Contact your private physician or [local county health department](#) for clinic times for Tdap vaccinations.