



## Vaccines for Your Children

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# Vaccine (Shot) for Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

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How to pronounce pertussis: [per-tuhs-is] or [Listen](#) 


Five doses of a DTaP shot for children and one Tdap shot for preteens are recommended by doctors as the best way to protect against whooping cough (pertussis).

## When should my child get a whooping cough shot?

One dose of DTaP at each of the following ages:

 1 <sup>st</sup> Dose 2 months	 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dose 4 months	 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dose 6 months
 4 <sup>th</sup> Dose 15 – 18 months	 5 <sup>th</sup> Dose 4 – 6 years	

One dose of Tdap at the following ages:

 1 <sup>st</sup> Dose 11 – 12 years
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## Why should my child get a whooping cough shot?

- Helps protect your child from whooping cough, a potentially serious and even deadly disease, as well as [diphtheria](#) and [tetanus](#).
- Helps prevent your child from having violent coughing fits from whooping cough.
- Helps protect your newborn when they are most vulnerable to serious disease and complications.
- Keeps your child from missing school or child care and you from missing work.

## What vaccines protect against whooping cough?

There are 2 vaccines that help protect children against whooping cough: DTaP and Tdap. Both also protect against diphtheria and tetanus. These shots do not offer lifetime protection.

## Whooping cough shots are safe.



Whooping cough shots are safe and effective at preventing whooping cough. Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. These are usually mild and go away on their own.

## What are the side effects?

Most children don't have any [side effects](#) from DTaP or Tdap. The side effects that do occur with DTaP are usually mild, and may include:

- Soreness or swelling where the shot was given
- Fever
- Fussiness
- Feeling tired
- Loss of appetite
- Vomiting

More serious side effects are very rare but with DTaP can include:

- A fever over 105 degrees
- Nonstop crying for 3 hours or more
- Seizures (jerking, twitching of the muscles, or staring)

The side effects from Tdap are usually mild, and may include:

- Pain, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- Mild fever
- Headache
- Feeling tired
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomachache

Some preteens and teens might faint after getting Tdap or any other shot.



**To prevent fainting and injuries related to fainting**, people should be seated or lying down during vaccination and remain in that position for 15 minutes after the vaccine is given.



**Prepare for your child's vaccine visit** and learn about how you can:

- Research vaccines and ready your child before the visit
- Comfort your child during the appointment
- Care for your child after the shot

Before, During, and After Shots

## What is whooping cough?

- Whooping cough is a very serious respiratory illness.

- It is caused by *Bordetella pertussis* bacteria.
- It can cause violent coughing fits.
- Whooping cough is most harmful for young babies and can be deadly.

## What are the symptoms of whooping cough?

Whooping cough usually starts with the following symptoms:

- Runny nose
- Low-grade fever (less than 100.4 degrees)
- Mild cough (babies do not do this)
- Apnea (life-threatening pause in breathing in babies) and cyanosis (turning blue or purple) in babies and young children

Children and babies may then begin to develop these more serious problems:

- Coughing very hard, over and over. These coughing fits happen more at night.
- Gasping for breath after a coughing fit. They may make a “whooping” sound. This sound is where the name “whooping cough” comes from. Babies may not cough or make this sound—they may gag, gasp, or stop breathing.
- Difficulty breathing, eating, drinking, or sleeping.
- Turning blue from lack of oxygen.
- Vomiting after coughing fits.

Coughing fits can last for up to 10 weeks or more, and sometimes happen again the next time the child has a respiratory illness.

## Is it serious?

Whooping cough is most dangerous for babies and young children. In fact, babies younger than 1 year old who have whooping cough may:

- Need to be cared for in the hospital
- Develop pneumonia (a serious lung infection)
- Have seizures
- Suffer brain damage



Women can get Tdap during pregnancy to pass whooping cough protection to their babies. This helps protect babies until they can start getting their own whooping cough shots. [Get vaccinated while pregnant.](#)

Whooping cough can even be deadly. About 1 in 2 deaths from whooping cough are among babies younger than 2 months old. These babies are too young to get whooping cough shots.

## How does whooping cough spread?

The bacteria that cause whooping cough spread easily through the air when a person who has whooping cough breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Almost everyone who is not immune to whooping cough will get sick if exposed to it. A person can spread the disease from the very beginning of the sickness (which may begin as cold-like symptoms) and for at least 2 weeks after coughing starts.

Since symptoms can be mild for some people, a baby can catch whooping cough from adults, grandparents, or older brothers or sisters who don't know they have the disease.

# Do people still get whooping cough in the United States?

Before the whooping cough vaccines were recommended for all infants, about 8,000 people in the United States died each year from whooping cough. Today, because of the vaccine, this number has dropped to fewer than 20 per year.

But, cases of whooping cough have been increasing since the late 1980s, and outbreaks of whooping cough can occur.

## Follow the vaccine schedule

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Family Physicians, and American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommend children receive all vaccines according to the [recommended vaccine schedule](#).

- [Get a list of vaccines that your child may need](#) based on age, health conditions, and other factors.
- [Learn the reasons you should follow the vaccine schedule](#).

Birth - 6 years schedule

7 - 18 years schedule

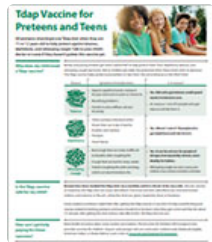


### Photos of the Disease

**WARNING:** Some of these photos might be unsuitable for children. Viewing discretion is advised.



### Learn More About This Disease



### Tdap Vaccine for Preteen and Teens

This fact sheet answers general questions about the booster shot that helps protect preteens and teens.

## Related Resources:

- Vaccine Information Statements (VISs) have detailed information about recommended vaccines. Read the VISs for vaccines that protect against diphtheria:
  - [DTaP vaccine](#) — protects against diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough (for infants and children) ([Other Languages](#) )
  - [Tdap vaccine](#) — protects against diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough (for adults) ([Other Languages](#) )
  - [Td vaccine](#) – protects against diphtheria and tetanus (for preteens, teens, and adults) ([Other Languages](#) )

Last Reviewed: September 27, 2022