



PERTUSSIS (WHOOPIING COUGH) FACT SHEET

WHAT IS PERTUSSIS?

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a bacteria.

HOW DO YOU GET PERTUSSIS?

Pertussis spreads from person to person typically by coughing or sneezing. The most common way infants get the illness is from siblings who are ill.

SYMPTOMS

Pertussis in its early stages appears to be nothing more than the common cold. Early symptoms can last for 1 to 2 weeks and usually include; runny nose, fever, and mild cough.

After 1 to 2 weeks and as the disease progresses, traditional symptoms of pertussis appear including; paroxysms (coughing fits) followed by a high-pitched “whoop” sound, vomiting during or after coughing fits, and exhaustion after coughing fits.

After exposure, it typically takes 5-10 days to show the first signs of being ill.

TREATMENT

There are several antibiotics available to treat pertussis. Early treatment is very important as it may make the infection less serious. Treatment can also help prevent spreading the disease to close contacts. If you or a member of your household has been diagnosed with pertussis, your doctor may recommend preventive antibiotics to other members of the household to help prevent the spread of disease. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

The best way to prevent pertussis is to get vaccinated.

Keep babies and other people at high risk for pertussis complications away from infected people.

Practice good hygiene to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses by covering your mouth or nose when you cough or sneeze and washing your hands often with soap and water.

DGHD EFFORTS

The Delaware General Health District (DGHD) offers the pertussis containing vaccine. Please call (740)203-2040 to determine if you need the vaccine and to schedule an appointment.

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the DGHD. The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.