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Whooping Cough - Pertussis

What is Whooping Cough?

Whooping cough¹ is an infection that spreads easily. It is caused by a bacterium called *Bordetella pertussis*². In some countries, the disease is also called the '100 day cough'. It is characterized by repeated, violent attacks of coughing. These attacks typically end with a rapid intake of breath, producing a "whooping" sound as the sufferer tries to catch their breath. This whooping sound is more common in children than adults.

Did You Know?

In 2015, the most recent year on record with the CDC, there were 20,762 reported cases of whooping cough in the U.S. Many more go unreported.

History

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Signs and Symptoms

The early symptoms of whooping cough are very similar to a cold. Patients have a runny nose, and exhibit sneezing, mild cough, and fever. These symptoms usually appear six days to three weeks after the patient's contact with the bacteria. Adults and teens may show weaker or different signs. Their symptoms may include longer coughing spells or coughing without the whoop.

Early whooping cough symptoms resemble those of a cold.

¹ **Whooping cough:** an easily spread infection characterized by repeated, violent coughing attacks.

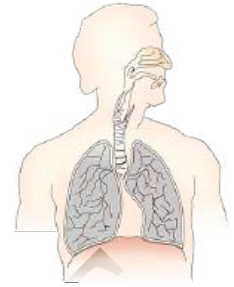
² ***Bordetella pertussis*:** the bacterium responsible for whooping cough.

How it spreads

Whooping cough is spread by direct contact, mainly contact with respiratory fluids from coughing or sneezing.

Diagnosis

There is only one sure way to **diagnose**³ whooping cough. This is by laboratory testing of the fluids from the throat or nose for the presence of the bacteria.



Whooping cough is spread through coughing or sneezing.

Treatments

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Prevention

Vaccines⁴ for the prevention of whooping cough are available and often required to attend school. The DTaP vaccine is given in childhood in a series of five vaccinations at 2,4,6, and 15-18 months, and then again at 4-6 years. A booster, called Tdap, is given at age 11-12 years. Adults 19 and older should replace one tetanus shot with a Tdap booster.



Vaccines prevent whooping cough.

³ The only way to **diagnose** whooping cough is through a laboratory test.

⁴ Whooping cough **vaccines** are given in early childhood and boosted in teens and adults.

Reading Comprehension Questions:

1. What bacterium causes whooping cough?
2. What
3. How is whooping cough usually transmitted?
4. What is
5. Why should children under two be hospitalized if they have whooping cough?

Extension Questions:

6. After
7. Research your school board/state/province. Is the DTaP vaccine mandatory to attend school? Do you think it should be?
8. Do you feel

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TWF READING

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