

Whooping Cough

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Introduction

Whooping cough, or pertussis, is a serious infection of the airways. Early symptoms are similar to the common cold and include sneezing, runny nose, mild fever, and a mild cough. Over the next 2 weeks, the cough gets worse, leading to severe, repeated, and forceful coughing spells that often end with a whooping sound before the next breath. The cough can last several months and often occurs more at night. Pertussis can cause complications such as pneumonia, seizures, brain damage or even death. Each year in Canada, 1 to 3 deaths occur due to pertussis, mostly in babies less than 3 months of age who have not been immunized.

Pertussis spreads easily when an infected person coughs, sneezes or has close contact with others. The infection can spread to others during the early stages when symptoms are not severe, and if left untreated, can spread up to 3 weeks after the cough starts.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect against pertussis. The pertussis vaccines are provided in combination with other vaccines such as diphtheria, polio and tetanus and are free as part of your child's routine immunizations. Call your health care provider to make an appointment.

For more information about whooping cough and vaccinations, call [8-1-1](tel:1-877-315-7273) or click the links below.

Featured topics

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Learn how pertussis is spread, the symptoms, home treatment advice, and more. Click on the link below to learn more.

- [Pertussis \(Whooping Cough\) \(HealthLinkBC File #15c\)](#)

Vaccination against Pertussis

The vaccines that protect against pertussis are part of your child's routine immunizations. A booster dose of the pertussis vaccine is recommended for adults who were immunized in childhood but is not provided for free in B.C. Click on the links below to learn more.

- [B.C. Immunization Schedules](#)
- [Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Polio \(Tdap-IPV\) Vaccine \(HealthLinkBC File #15a\)](#)

- [Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Haemophilus influenzae Type b \(DTaP-IPV-Hib\) Vaccine \(HealthLinkBC File #15b\)](#)
- [Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis \(Tdap\) Vaccine \(HealthLinkBC File #18c\)](#)
- [Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Hepatitis B, Polio and Haemophilus influenzae type b \(DTaP-HB-IPV-Hib\) Vaccine \(HealthLinkBC File #105\)](#)

The benefits of immunization

Getting immunized is the best way to protect you and your family from serious and sometimes deadly diseases. When you get immunized, you help protect others as well. Click on the links below to learn more about immunization in British Columbia.

- [A Better Immunization Experience for your Child \(HealthLinkBC File #50e\)](#)
- [Childhood Vaccines are Safe \(HealthLinkBC File #50c\)](#)
- [The Benefits of Immunizing Your Child \(HealthLinkBC File #50b\)](#)
- [Your Baby's Immune System and Vaccines \(HealthLinkBC File #50a\)](#)

Your health authority

For information related to whooping cough from your health authority, where available, click on the links below.

- [First Nations Health Authority: Communicable Disease Control](#)
- [Fraser Health: Whooping Cough](#)
- [Interior Health: Infant & Child Immunization](#)
- [Northern Health: School and youth health](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health: Whooping Cough](#)

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/more/resources/healthlink-bc-files or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C., visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.