

Pregnant?

Protect Yourself and Your Baby from Pertussis

Pertussis (“whooping cough”): A serious disease for babies

- Recent outbreaks of pertussis in Washington and nationally have caused hospitalizations and deaths in young infants.
- Infants younger than one year are at high risk for hospitalizations and deaths from pertussis; infants 2 months and younger are at the highest risk.
- Pertussis is a disease that spreads easily by coughing and sneezing.
- In infants, pertussis can cause pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death. It can cause coughing spells in older children and adults, but *babies* with pertussis often cannot cough, have problems feeding, and may stop breathing and turn blue.



Get the pertussis (Tdap) vaccine during pregnancy to protect yourself and your newborn

- **The advisory committee to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that pregnant women receive Tdap vaccine during each pregnancy, preferably between 27-36 weeks gestation. This is when the vaccine works best to protect you and your newborn from pertussis.**
- Tdap vaccine is safe during pregnancy. If you receive Tdap during pregnancy, you and your newborn are more likely to be protected from pertussis at the time you deliver.
- Infection fighting antibodies that you get from the vaccine are passed on to your baby for additional protection.
- If you did not get the Tdap booster before or during your pregnancy, it is also safe to get the vaccine right after you deliver your baby and if you are breastfeeding.

You, your family, and your baby’s caregivers need a pertussis booster

- Three out of four babies with pertussis get it from their parents, other family members, or caregivers who have the disease but might not know it.
- Infants cannot get their first dose of pertussis vaccine (DTaP) until they are at least six weeks old. Until your baby has had at least three doses of DTaP by age 6 months, she will have little protection.
- The best way to protect your newborn against pertussis before he has gotten at least three doses of DTaP is to make sure that you and everyone else who will have close contact with your baby is up-to-date on their pertussis vaccinations, including the adolescent/adult pertussis vaccine (**Tdap**).

Talk with your doctor, nurse, or clinic

- Ask your doctor or nurse to give you the pertussis vaccine during your pregnancy. If your doctor, nurse, or clinic does not offer the vaccine, check local pharmacies.
- For added protection, ask your doctor or nurse to vaccinate your family members before the baby is born.



For more information about pertussis:

- <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/diseases/whoopingcough.aspx>
- <http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/WhoopingCough.aspx>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/features/pertussis/>
- **Public Health – Seattle & King County, 206-296-4774**

Alternate formats available
TTY Relay: 711
206-296-4774 (Voice)