



PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough) SCHOOL FACT SHEET

ATTENTION

This disease is **reportable** to the health department.
Please consult with Berkeley Public Health Division before using this fact sheet (981-5300).

EXCLUSION

- Until **5 days after** antibiotic treatment has begun.

CAUSE

- *Bordetella pertussis* bacteria

SYMPTOMS

- Begin 5-21 days after exposure to pertussis bacteria
- Begins with a runny nose, sneezing, mild cough, possibly low-grade fever
- Progresses to uncontrollable fits of coughing that often end in a high-pitched “whoop” sound and vomiting (infants less than six months old, older children and adults may not have the “whoop”).
- Coughing is prolonged and often interferes with sleep.
- Infected infants and preschoolers are at more risk for serious illness.

SPREAD

- Infected person coughs or sneezes and releases tiny droplets with the bacteria that are breathed in by another person.
- Spread among members of a household is common.
- Mildly ill adults and teens can spread disease to infants and children.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD

- Begins when symptoms are still mild and disease may not be obvious. Person will remain contagious until 3 weeks after coughing begins if not treated. If treated, continues until 5 days after appropriate antibiotic treatment begins.

PREVENTION OR CONTROL

- Vaccination against pertussis is the number one way to prevent infection.
- Adolescents need a booster dose of vaccine when they are 11 years of age or older.
- Adults need one booster dose of pertussis vaccine (parents, teachers, school staff and volunteers).
- Keep infected person out of school until 5 days of antibiotics have been taken.

WHAT TO DO

- Consult a health care provider.
- Make sure children, teens and adults are appropriately vaccinated.
- Complete treatment as ordered.
- Treatment may include antibiotics for the whole family and other close contacts of infected person.
- Occasionally, infected person may need to be hospitalized.

References: AAP (2006). *Red Book: 2006 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*.
CDC, Division of Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases (2005). *Pertussis*.
Hennepin County Community Health Department (2003). *Pertussis (Whooping Cough)*.
Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (2002). *Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Fact Sheet*.
Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services ((2007). *Pertussis (Whooping Cough)*.