

Pregnant?

Protect yourself and your baby against Whooping Cough (Pertussis)



Tacoma-Pierce County
Health Department
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Babies and Whooping Cough

- Babies with pertussis may develop pneumonia, seizures, brain damage or can die.
- Babies under two months old are at the greatest risk of catching whooping cough because they have no immunity to the disease.
- Newborns and very young babies might not show the signs of whooping cough like older babies and children. Instead they may have problems feeding, stop breathing and turn blue.
- People who have whooping cough spread it when they talk, cough or sneeze.



Pregnancy and Tdap Vaccine

- You should get a Tdap shot between 27 and 36 weeks of every pregnancy.
- Your immune system will make antibodies (infection fighters) against whooping cough that will transfer to your baby in the last weeks of pregnancy.
- Your baby will be born already immunized against whooping cough until he receives his first vaccine at two months of age.
- Even if you had a Tdap shot right before you became pregnant or with your last pregnancy, you need another one during this pregnancy.
- It is best to get the Tdap shot during pregnancy, but if you do not, get it as soon as you can, after delivery.
- Safety studies have determined that Tdap is safe to take during pregnancy.

Baby's DTaP Vaccine

- DTaP vaccination is given to babies at two, four and six months of age to protect against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough (Pertussis).
- DTaP boosters are given to children at 12 to 18 months and again at age four to six years.
- Tdap vaccine is given at age 11 years.

Three out of four infants who catch whooping cough get it from someone who's close.

Protection for Family Members

- Three out of four infants who catch whooping cough catch it from a family member or close contact.
- Household members and close contacts of the newborn should be up to date on their vaccines, including Tdap and flu.
- All adults who have never had a Tdap vaccine should have one.
- Make sure to keep your baby away from sick people who are coughing or sneezing.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow. Wash your hands frequently and/or use alcohol-based hand cleaner.

Babies and Pertussis

Talk to your doctor about whooping cough (Tdap) vaccine.

- Ask your doctor to give you the vaccine between 27 and 36 weeks of pregnancy.
- If your doctor does not have the vaccine, check with a local pharmacy or your health department.
- Refer your friends, relatives, babysitters and daycare providers for immunizations.

For pharmacies that give vaccines:

- www.tpchd.org/immunizations
- www.vaccinefinder.org
- Call (253) 798-6410

To learn more about pertussis:

- www.tpchd.org/vaccines
- www.midwife.org/ImmunizeWomen
- www.immunizationforwomen.org/providers/diseases-vaccines/tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis/faqs.php

