



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Henderson County, NC

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

What you should know

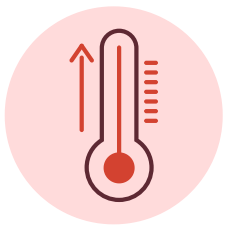
What is Whooping Cough?

Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, is a very contagious respiratory illness. It spreads from person to person, primarily through coughing and sneezing.

It is called whooping cough due to the “whooping” sound people can make when gasping for air after a coughing fit.

Pertussis can affect anyone, but infants younger than 12 months of age and individuals with weakened immune systems are at the highest risk for severe complications and death.

Early symptoms can last for 1 to 2 weeks and usually include:



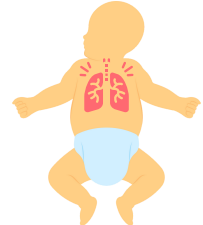
Low-grade Fever
(less than 100.4°F)



Mild, Occasional Cough



Runny Nose

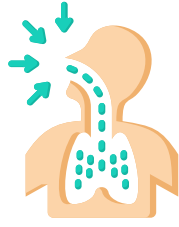


Pauses in breathing
(in babies)

Later symptoms can include:



Rapid, Violent, and Uncontrolled Coughing Fits



Whooping Sound When Inhaling



Vomiting



Very Tired After Coughing Fit

Antibiotics

Preventive antibiotics are given to someone who has been exposed to harmful bacteria to help keep them from getting sick.

If you've been around someone with whooping cough, talk with a healthcare provider about whether preventive antibiotics are recommended. Even after treatment, some people may continue coughing and have symptoms for weeks or months.

Prevention

- Wash your hands regularly or use hand sanitizer.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid sharing eating utensils, cups, towels, or other personal items.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick when possible.
- If symptoms develop, stay away from work or school and seek medical advice.

Vaccination

People of all ages need **WHOOPING COUGH VACCINES**



DTaP

for young children

- ✓ 2, 4, and 6 months
- ✓ 15 through 18 months
- ✓ 4 through 6 years

Tdap

for preteens

- ✓ 11 through 12 years

Tdap

for pregnant women

- ✓ During the 27-36th week of each pregnancy

Tdap

for adults

- ✓ Anytime for those who have never received it

www.cdc.gov/whoopingcough



CS356221-A



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Henderson County, NC

Henderson County Department of Public Health



1200 Spartanburg Highway, Suite 100 Hendersonville, NC 28792



(828) 692-4223



www.hendersoncountync.gov/health

Updated: 12/2025