



## Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

### Information for Parents / Caregivers

#### What you should know

- Whooping cough is a serious and highly infectious disease and is spread through the community by coughing and sneezing.
- **Young children**, especially babies under 12 months and those with a weak immune system (immunocompromised) can become extremely ill from whooping cough.
- **Newborn babies** are at most risk so **pregnant women** in their third trimester should seek treatment if they get whooping cough or are exposed to it.
- Older children and adults can get whooping cough too, which if not diagnosed and treated, may spread to young children

#### Symptoms

Whooping cough starts with a runny nose, fever and dry cough. After around one week the coughing usually gets worse and children can have coughing fits that end with a 'whoop' or vomiting. Young babies can be very sick with whooping cough and may need to be hospitalised.

#### What you can do

- **If you think your child might have whooping cough** see your GP immediately. Keep your child at home, away from day care and other young children / babies.
- **On time immunisations** gives babies the best protection.
  - Whooping cough immunisations are given at 6 weeks, 3 months and 5 months with boosters at 4 years and 11 years.
  - See your GP if your child needs to catch-up their immunisations.
  - All pregnant women can get a free whooping cough vaccine between 28 and 38 weeks of pregnancy from their GP.
- **Staying home from day care** - children and staff diagnosed with whooping cough will be required to stay home until they have had 5 days of antibiotics or for up to three weeks if they don't take antibiotics.

For further advice call the Immunisation Advisory Centre on 0800 IMMUNE (466 863) or visit the Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service website:  
[www.ttophs.govt.nz/whooping\\_cough](http://www.ttophs.govt.nz/whooping_cough)