

Your child may have been exposed to:

Pertussis

Pertussis (whooping cough) can be a serious bacterial illness especially in young, unvaccinated children.

If you think your child has Pertussis:

- Tell your childcare provider or call the school.
- **Need to stay home?**

Childcare and School:

Yes, until 5 days after your child starts taking antibiotics.

If staff or children are not treated, they need to stay home until 21 days after cough starts.

Symptoms

Your child may first have a runny nose, sneezing, mild cough, and possibly fever.

After 1 or 2 weeks, your child may cough in explosive bursts. These coughing attacks can end in vomiting and/or in a high-pitched whoop. Coughing attacks occur most often at night. This may last up to three months.

If your child has been infected, it may take 5 to 21 days (usually 7 to 10 days) for symptoms to start.

Spread

- By coughing or sneezing.

Contagious Period

From the time of the first cold-like symptoms until 21 days after coughing begin. Antibiotics shorten the time a child with pertussis can give it to others.

Call your Healthcare Provider

If someone in your home has:

- ♦ had a cough 7 or more days. Laboratory tests may be done. Antibiotics will reduce the contagious period, but may do little to relieve your child's cough.
- ♦ been exposed to pertussis. Also, if public health has recommended that antibiotics are needed because of an exposure.

Prevention

- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing. Use a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues.
- Wash hands after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the nose or mouth. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- All children 2 months of age or older enrolled in childcare or school must be vaccinated against pertussis or have an exemption. Age appropriate pertussis vaccine should be administered in the absence of documented laboratory confirmed disease.
- **There is also a pertussis vaccine for adolescents and adults**, and is recommended for persons having close contact with children under one year of age.
- Parents should keep infants away from individuals with cough illness.

For more information, call Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS) at 573-751-6113 or 866-628-9891 (8-5 Monday thru Friday) or call your local health department.