

Pertussis (whooping cough):

What you need to know

What is pertussis?

Pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory infection. It is a bacterial infection caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. Infection can lead to uncontrollable coughing and serious complications, including pneumonia, seizures, and hernias.

Pertussis is usually spread by coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others, or from sharing personal items or things like drinks or utensils.

Individuals of any age can be affected, although pertussis is most common in children and infants. It is most severe in infants who are too young to be fully immunized against pertussis (i.e., infants under 1 year of age).

Who should be immunized?

- Infants, children and adolescents, according to the childhood immunization schedule in their province/territory.
- Adults who have not previously been vaccinated, especially if they are going to be near small children.
- Pregnant persons should be immunized against pertussis in every pregnancy. Immunization against pertussis during pregnancy is safe and helps reduce the risk of the disease in infants.

Publicly funded immunization schedules for pertussis may vary between provinces and territories.

Are you protected against pertussis?

Pertussis vaccines are safe and the most effective way to help prevent pertussis infection.



Talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or public health office about getting the pertussis vaccine for you or your child.

For more information, visit:

<https://immunize.ca/pertussis-whooping-cough>

References

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2023.) Canadian Immunization Guide. Pertussis vaccine. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-15-pertussis-vaccine.html>

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2020.) Pertussis (whooping cough): risks. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/vaccine-preventable-diseases/pertussis-whooping-cough/risks.html>