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Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Fact Sheet

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Pertussis (Whooping Cough) is a highly contagious bacterial infection that causes coughing and gagging with little or no fever. An infected person has coughing episodes that may end in vomiting or cause a “whoop” sound when the person tries to breathe in.

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- ³ Pertussis is most dangerous to children less than 1-year of age. Complications for infants include pneumonia, convulsions, and in rare cases, brain damage or death.
 - ³ Serious complications are less likely in older children and adults.

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- ³ Pertussis is spread through direct or indirect contact with respiratory droplets that enter the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
 - ³ Spread can occur in the early stage when symptoms appear as a cold or later when the infected person begins to cough.
 - ³ Those treated with one of the recommended antibiotics are contagious until the first 5 days of antibiotic treatment have been completed. The total duration of treatment depends on the antibiotic prescribed.

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