

**April 2024**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The Montgomery County Office of Public Health (MCOPH) has identified an increase in cases of pertussis, also known as whooping cough, at Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School. To support the management and prevent possible further spread, MCOPH recommends the following control measures based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- **Children should be observed over the next 3 weeks** for any symptoms such as a running nose, sudden, uncontrollable bursts or spells of coughing, and persistent cough that sometimes cause vomiting.
- **If your child has symptoms of pertussis, keep your child home from school and activities**, such as sports or after-school activities. Your child should be evaluated and tested by their medical provider. Testing for pertussis detection includes a *nasopharyngeal culture or PCR*.
- **If your child has a health condition that may be made worse with pertussis, such as asthma**, ask your child's doctor to prescribe antibiotics to your child as soon as possible to prevent pertussis regardless of whether they are coughing.
- **If your child lives with a person who is pregnant, a baby younger than 12 months old, or anyone with health conditions that may be made worse with pertussis**, ask your child's doctor to prescribe antibiotics to your child as soon as possible to prevent pertussis regardless of whether they are coughing.
- **If your child has been diagnosed with pertussis by their doctor**, notify the school and keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports or play groups, until your child has been on appropriate antibiotics for five days to treat pertussis.
- **If your child's doctor says that your child does NOT have whooping cough**, ask for a note telling the school that your child's cough is not pertussis and that they can return to school and activities.
- **Make sure that your family's pertussis vaccinations are up to date.** Protection against pertussis from the childhood vaccine, DTaP, decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, should get a pertussis booster shot called Tdap to help protect themselves and babies.

For more information on pertussis and prevention see below resources and attachments. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact your healthcare provider or MCOPH at (610) 278-5117 or at [MCOPHCommunicable@montgomerycountypa.gov](mailto:MCOPHCommunicable@montgomerycountypa.gov).

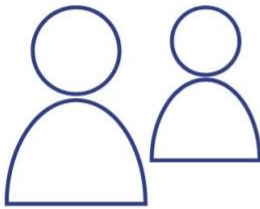
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | [Pertussis \(Whooping Cough\)](#)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | [5 Things to Know About Whooping Cough](#)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | [Whooping Cough: Pertussis Vaccination](#)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | [Pertussis: Postexposure Antimicrobial Prophylaxis](#)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | [Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette](#)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | [When and How to Wash Your Hands](#)  
Medical Centric | [Whooping Cough: Causes, Signs and Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Treatment\(video\)](#)

# PERTUSSIS

Pertussis, also known as *whooping cough*, is a very contagious respiratory illness that spreads from person to person.

## 1 PERTUSSIS CAN BE VERY SERIOUS, ESPECIALLY FOR BABIES.

- Pertussis can cause serious illness in people of all ages and can even be life threatening, especially in babies.
- Pertussis can lead to convulsions, pneumonia, brain damage, apnea and death.



## 2 PERTUSSIS IS VERY CONTAGIOUS.

- Pertussis spreads easily from person to person through coughing and sneezing.
- Some people have mild symptoms and don't know they have pertussis, but they can still spread the bacteria that causes it to others.

## 3 SYMPTOMS CAN LAST FOR WEEKS.

- Symptoms include: coughing, coughing fits, and vomiting.
- Pertussis can cause rapid, violent, and uncontrolled coughing fits until all air is gone from the lungs. These coughing fits can go on for up to 10 weeks or more.



## 4 BABIES MAY NOT COUGH AT ALL.

- Babies may not cough at all. Instead, they may have apnea (life-threatening pauses in breathing) or struggle to breathe.
- Any time someone is struggling to breathe, it is important to get them to a doctor right away.

## 5 VACCINES ARE THE BEST PROTECTION AGAINST PERTUSSIS.

- Two vaccines in the United States help prevent pertussis: DTaP and Tdap. Children younger than 7 years old get DTaP, while older children, teens, and adults get Tdap.
- Pregnant people should get a Tdap vaccine during the third trimester of each pregnancy to help protect their baby early in life.

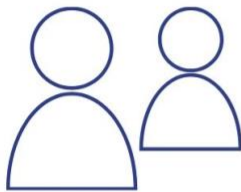


# PERTUSIS

La tos ferina, también conocida como tos ferina, es una enfermedad respiratoria muy contagiosa que se transmite de persona a persona.

## 1 LA TOS FERINA PUEDE SER MUY GRAVE, ESPECIALMENTE PARA LOS BEBÉS.

- La tos ferina puede causar enfermedades graves en personas de todas las edades e incluso puede poner en peligro la vida, especialmente en los bebés.
- La tos ferina puede provocar convulsiones, neumonía, daño cerebral, apnea y la muerte.



## 2 LA TOS FERINA ES MUY CONTAGIOSA.

- La tos ferina se transmite fácilmente de persona a persona al toser y estornudar.
- Algunas personas tienen síntomas leves y no saben que tienen tos ferina, pero aun así pueden transmitir la bacteria que la causa a otras personas.

## 3 LOS SÍNTOMAS PUEDEN DURAR SEMANAS.

- Los síntomas incluyen: tos, ataques de tos y vómitos.
- La tos ferina puede causar ataques de tos rápidos, violentos e incontrolados hasta que desaparece todo el aire de los pulmones. Estos ataques de tos pueden durar hasta 10 semanas o más.



## 4 ES POSIBLE QUE LOS BEBÉS NO TOSEN EN ABSOLUTO.

- Es posible que los bebés no tosen en absoluto. En cambio, pueden tener apnea (pausas en la respiración que ponen en peligro su vida) o dificultad para respirar.
- Cada vez que alguien tiene dificultades para respirar, es importante llevarlo a un médico de inmediato.

## 5 LAS VACUNAS SON LA MEJOR PROTECCIÓN CONTRA LA TOS FERINA.

- En los Estados Unidos, dos vacunas ayudan a prevenir la tos ferina: DTaP y Tdap. Los niños menores de 7 años reciben la DTaP, mientras que los niños mayores, los adolescentes y los adultos reciben la Tdap.
- Las mujeres embarazadas deben recibir la vacuna Tdap durante el tercer trimestre de cada embarazo para ayudar a proteger a su bebé en las primeras etapas de la vida.



Montgomery County  
Department of  
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[www.montgomerycountypa.gov/health](http://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/health)