

**PERTUSSIS (WHOOPIING COUGH)- is a bacterial illness that can become serious in young, unvaccinated children.**

- **Symptoms:** Your child may first have a runny nose, sneezing, mild cough and possibly a fever. After 1 to 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:** Pertussis is spread by coughing or sneezing.
- **Contagious Period:** Your child is contagious from the time of the first cold-like symptoms until 21 days after coughing begins. Antibiotics shorten the time a child with pertussis can give it to others. Your child must stay home for 5 days after starting the antibiotic. If not treated, the child must stay home until 21 days after the cough begins.
- **Call Your Healthcare Provider:** Contact your provider if someone in your home has had a cough 7 or more days. Laboratory tests may need to be done. Antibiotics will reduce the contagious period, but may do little to relieve your child's cough. If your child has been exposed to pertussis or the public health department has recommended your child begin antibiotics due to exposure, you should contact your healthcare provider.
- **Prevention:** You should cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing by using your sleeve or a tissue and properly dispose of used tissue. Wash your 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 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 illnesses.

Source- Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases: A Guide for School Administrators, Nurses, Teachers, Child Care Providers, and Parents or Guardians; Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services-Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention)