

## 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.

**Keep your child home from childcare and school** until 5 days after your child starts taking antibiotics. If not treated, your child needs to stay home for 21 days after the cough started.

Antibiotics shorten the time a child with pertussis can give it to others (no longer contagious after 5 days of antibiotics).

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or call your local health department.

**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 whooping sound. Coughing attacks occur most often at night. This may last up to three months.

If your child has been infected, it may take 4 to 21 days (usually 7 to 10 days) for symptoms to start.

**Spread**

- By coughing or sneezing.
- By touching contaminated hands, objects, or surfaces.

**Contagious period**

From the time of the first cold-like symptoms until 21 days after coughing begins **or** after taking 5 days of antibiotics.

**Call your health care provider**

If anyone in your home has:

- had a cough for 7 days or more. Lab tests may be done. Antibiotics will reduce the contagious period, but may do little to relieve your child's cough.
- been exposed to pertussis, especially 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 in the trash.
- Wash hands after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the nose or mouth. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- In Minnesota, all children 2 months of age or older enrolled in childcare or school must be vaccinated against pertussis or have a legal exemption. Consider a pertussis booster vaccine for adolescents and adults (Tdap), especially for those who have close contact with young children. Pregnant women should get a Tdap during each pregnancy, preferably during their third trimester.