

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Vaccine

What is Pertussis?

Pertussis (otherwise known as whooping cough) is a disease that can cause serious illness requiring hospitalization, and sometimes causes death, in newborns.

Why should I receive the pertussis vaccine during pregnancy?

You may have been vaccinated as a child to protect against pertussis, however, immunity levels decrease over time, so many adults are no longer protected. Infants do not start to become immune to whooping cough until after they have their second shot at four months of age, leaving them at risk for the first few months of life.

Boosting your immunity in pregnancy will allow you to pass antibodies to your baby through the placenta, as well as through your breast milk, if you choose to breastfeed. Your baby will have the protection of your antibodies in their system until they start to develop their own, in response to their vaccines.

When should I receive the pertussis vaccine?

The vaccine is safe any time in pregnancy and is ideally given after 21 weeks of pregnancy and 4 weeks before delivery.

Who should receive the pertussis vaccine?

Pregnant women should be vaccinated for pertussis during pregnancy to decrease the chance of your baby catching whooping cough as a newborn. We also recommend that any adults who will be in close contact with baby receive a booster vaccine to decrease the chance of them catching the illness and passing it on to your baby. Your baby should also receive his or her routine childhood immunizations, which include whooping cough.

Where can I receive the pertussis vaccine?

You can receive one dose of the booster vaccine free of charge at your local pharmacy.