

HEALTH ADVISORY: 2024 Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Cases Expected to Break Record

December 2, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

We hope this message finds you well.

Oregon is expected to break the record of 910 pertussis (also known as whooping cough) cases set in 2012 by the end of this year. As of December 2, 2024, Oregon has seen 897 pertussis cases in 24 counties. Tragically, one adult has died from pertussis this year. Locally, Benton County has 11 pertussis cases this year.

What Is Whooping Cough?

- Whooping cough is a respiratory disease caused by bacteria.
- It can be very dangerous for babies.
- **Vaccination is the best way to stop Whooping Cough.** The vaccine is given to infants and to pregnant mothers.
- Talk to your doctor about this important vaccine to protect infants and unborn children.

Who Gets Whooping Cough?

- Everyone can get whooping cough.
- Babies, young children, pregnant persons, and elders 60+ are at highest risk.
- Newborn babies get whooping cough more often because they are too young for vaccines.

What Are Whooping Cough Symptoms?

- Whooping cough has cold or flu-like symptoms during the first week.
- After 1 or 2 weeks, the cough gets worse and can have very strong coughing fits.
- The cough can last more than 6 weeks.
- Babies and children coughing fits can be followed by a “whoop” as they try to catch their breath.
- Whooping cough can make it very hard for babies to eat, drink, or breathe.
- Persons with whooping cough may have a hard time catching their breath, throw up after coughing, and/or loss color in the face because they cannot breathe.

How to Stop Whooping Cough?

- **Vaccination is the best way to stop whooping cough.**
 - DTaP for Children: 5 vaccines starting at 2 months of age until kindergarten.
 - Tdap: Immunity wears off, so adolescents and adults need a Tdap booster shot.
 - Adolescents should get a booster (Tdap) starting at age 11 and then every 10 years.
 - The booster helps protect adolescents and adults from getting pertussis and spreading it to vulnerable infants.
 - Pregnant persons should ask their health care provider about getting a Tdap booster in their third trimester of each pregnancy to protect their babies.
 - Whooping cough can be treated with medicine called antibiotics (typically, a 5-day course of azithromycin).
 - Sometimes the antibiotics may not be given early enough to stop the worst symptoms.
- Covering/masking your cough.
- Washing your hands.
- Keeping babies away from sick persons who are coughing.

Where to Find More Whooping Cough Information?

More information on whooping cough be located at these links:

- [Oregon Health Authority Pertussis Press Release](#)
- [Oregon Health Authority Pertussis Facts](#)
- [CDC Whooping Cough \(Pertussis\)](#)
- [CDC Whooping Cough Vaccine Recommendations](#)

We appreciate your support of our shared goal of improved community health.

Respectfully,



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