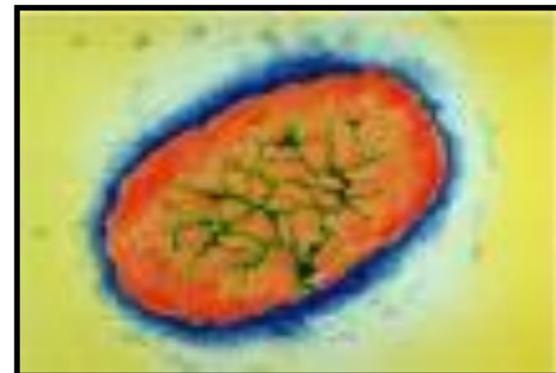


Whooping Cough/Pertussis:

What is Whooping cough or Pertussis?

Whooping cough is a **highly contagious** respiratory disease caused by a bacteria (*bordetella pertussis*).

There have been several suspected outbreaks in schools in recent years. There were 17,100 cases of pertussis reported in 2009.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that the rate of pertussis in the US is the highest it has been in **52 years**.

How is it transmitted?



Image: Microsoft clipart

It's transmitted by direct contact with secretions, by airborne droplets/fine particles.

Incubation (the time between exposure and infection) is 7-20 days.

Infected persons are highly contagious **before** coughing starts.

What are the symptoms?

- Early symptoms – easy to confuse with other respiratory illnesses – are runny nose, mild, occasional cough and low grade fever.
- The symptoms usually grow worse and include uncontrollable, violent coughing which often makes it harder to breathe.
- Someone with pertussis often takes deep breathes which result in a “whooping sound”.
- The coughing can last for 10 weeks or more.
- Other symptoms include weight loss, incontinence, rib fractures and passing out.



Image: Courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- **5 out every 100 adults with pertussis are hospitalized** or have complications including pneumonia.

Treatment

Antibiotics taken early on (before coughing occurs) may relieve the severity of the coughing or symptoms.

Antibiotics also can reduce the transmission of the bacteria.

Prevention

Most effective: Immunization or Vaccination

- Adults (19-65) should receive the **Tdap** booster (licensed in 2005) every 10 years.
- **Tdap** includes tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis in one shot.



Image: Microsoft clipart



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Somewhat effective: Policy

If there is a diagnosed case in a school or workplace, institute a temporary ***exclusion for cough illness*** policy.

Staff and students with a cough should be sent home until released to come back to school/work by a physician.

Least effective: Cleaning

- Cleaning contaminated surfaces (secretions etc.) with a mild detergent is probably as effective as disinfecting an area.
- Bleach and other disinfectants should be used very sparingly if at all.

Is there an OSHA standard for Pertussis?

No.