

# Parents & Caregivers

## Of School-age Children

# Whooping Cough

## On the Rise in Washtenaw County

### Pertussis (whooping cough) Facts

#### Increasing cases

- There is a pertussis outbreak in Washtenaw County—with 127 cases as of September 22, 2010 (compared to 23 in 2008 and 81 in 2009).
- Pertussis is a very contagious disease of the respiratory tract. Pertussis is most serious for babies, but it can cause severe coughing and difficulty breathing in children and adults. Coughing may last for weeks or months.
- Most local cases (58%) are occurring among children and teens 5-19 years old. Adults account for an additional 30% of cases.

#### Get vaccinated

- Check your child's vaccination records. Make sure he or she is vaccinated against pertussis.
- Children 10 years and older and adults may need a pertussis booster. The Tdap vaccine is recommended for everyone 10 to 64 years of age.
- Vaccination is especially important for new parents and anyone who is around babies. Pertussis is often spread to babies from teens and adults who don't realize they have it.
- Vaccination is available at the health department or from your health care provider.

#### Symptoms

- Symptoms of pertussis include low grade fever, runny nose and cough that becomes worse after 1-2 weeks. Coughing may last a month or more.
- Many teens and adults with pertussis do not make the classic "whooping" sound when coughing.
- Call your health care provider if a cough lasts longer than two weeks, there is vomiting after coughing, respiratory problems or any unusual cough.

#### Treatment

- Antibiotics are used to treat pertussis.
- Persons treated for pertussis should remain home for 5 days while they take antibiotics.
- Antibiotics are also recommended for other members of the household to prevent additional illness.

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