



PROTECT YOURSELF & YOUR FAMILY FROM PERTUSSIS (WHOOPIING COUGH)

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) advises southwestern Saskatchewan residents to ensure routine childhood immunizations are up-to-date following a recent Pertussis (whooping cough) outbreak in southern Alberta.

What is Pertussis?

It is a serious and highly contagious infection of the lungs and throat caused by *Bordetella pertussis* bacteria. Young children **who have not been immunized** get sicker than other children therefore, immunization is key to preventing serious illness and outcomes. In addition, early diagnosis and treatment is important to stop the spread of the pertussis bacteria.

- Pertussis spreads easily when an infected person coughs, sneezes or has close contact with others. It starts like a common cold with symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose, mild fever and a mild cough.
- During the next week or two, the cough gets worse, leading to severe coughing spells that often end with a whooping sound before the next breath, especially in young children.
- Teenagers and adults may not make the whooping sound.
- The cough can last one to two months and occurs more often at night. The cough can make a person gag or spit out mucus, making it hard to breathe. This prevents enough oxygen from getting to the brain.

Is Pertussis Treatable?

Immunization is key to preventing serious illness and outcomes. Pertussis is treated with antibiotics, which help reduce the spread of infection and the duration of illness when given during the very early stage.

The whooping cough vaccine (given as a combined vaccine called Tdap) is recommended for every pregnancy, given between 27 and 32 weeks. Immunization in pregnancy is safe and provides protection to infants until they are able to receive the pertussis vaccine at two months of age. Partners should receive a single dose if they have not had a booster dose after turning 18. Immunization is also recommended for adult caregivers of infants under six months if they have not received Tdap as an adult.

Pertussis-containing vaccines are part of the routine childhood immunization program (2 months of age to Grade 8). An adult immunization program is now available as well.

For More Information:

- Visit www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/diseases-and-conditions/pertussis-whooping-cough#complications-and-symptoms
- Talk to a health-care provider. Call 8-1-1, or call/visit your nearest Public Health office.



Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.



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