

## Symptoms

- Symptoms appear between 5 and 10 days after exposure to the bacteria.
- The disease starts with cold symptoms: runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever, and a mild cough. Sometime in the first 2 weeks, episodes of severe cough develop and that can last 1 to 2 months. The person may look and feel fairly healthy between these episodes.
- During bouts of severe cough, the lips and nails may turn blue for lack of air. Vomiting may occur after severe coughing spells.
- During the severe coughing stage, seizures or even death can occur, particularly in an infant.
- Immunized school children and adults have milder symptoms than young children.

## Transmission

- Pertussis is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
- The greatest risk of spread is during the early stage when it appears to be a cold.
- Those treated with antibiotics are contagious until the first 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment have been completed.

## Treatment

- The drug of choice is an antibiotic called Erythromycin, but your doctor may choose to treat you with Azithromycin (Z-pack) or some other medication.
- People with Pertussis need to stay at home for the first five days of antibiotic treatment in order to stop the spread of the disease – this means staying home from daycare, school, or work.
- It is especially important to stay away from infants and children who have not had all of their vaccinations yet.
- Household members of a person diagnosed with Pertussis will also need to take antibiotics in order to stop the spread of the disease.
- If you are in the same childcare classroom as someone who has had Pertussis, you should also take antibiotics.
- Remember, if you are put on antibiotics, it is very important that you take the full course of treatment prescribed.
- The vaccination against pertussis is included in the DTP and DTaP vaccines. Before age 7, children should get 5 doses of the DTP or DTaP vaccine. These are usually given at 2, 4, 6, and 15-18 months of age and 4 - 6 years of age. (The 4th dose may be given as early as 12 months of age.)
- Protection from the DTaP vaccine only lasts for 7-10 years, therefore children ages 11 and older and adults can still get this disease.