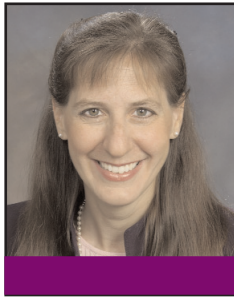


tips

from Dr. Middleman



Are You Sure it's Just a Cold or the Flu?

Know the Signs and Symptoms of Pertussis

Be Educated about Vaccinations

Keep a Record of all Vaccinations

How Pertussis is Contracted

Be Aware of Who is at Risk

Make Routine Visits to your Healthcare Provider

Take Action Immediately

- + Pertussis causes severe coughing spells, typically followed by a high-pitched whoop, which can make it difficult to eat, drink, sleep or even breathe
- + Adolescents often do not exhibit the classic "whoop" that is associated with the disease
- + In fact, adolescent signs and symptoms are similar to the common cold including a mild fever, severe cough and runny nose
- + However, for these older pertussis sufferers, severe coughing episodes can lead to vomiting, a hernia, or even a broken rib

- + Currently, pertussis vaccination is given in combination with diphtheria and tetanus (DTaP) in five doses given at two, four and six months of age, 15 to 18 months of age and four to six years of age
- + Immunity to pertussis wanes five to 10 years after the last childhood dose leaving many teens unprotected against the disease

- + Since the pertussis vaccination is given at several stages in a child's life, it is important to keep a record when each vaccination is received
- + With all vaccinations, remember to ask your healthcare provider if any booster immunizations are needed

- + Pertussis is spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- + Pertussis has no distinct seasonal pattern, but may increase in the summer and fall

- + Adolescents become susceptible when immunity wanes (five-10 years after last DTaP vaccination administered at four-six years old)
- + Children who are too young to be fully vaccinated and those who have not completed the primary vaccination series are at highest risk for severe illness
- + Pertussis is highly contagious and outbreaks can spread quickly through communities, especially among teenagers who tend to cluster together in social, athletic and academic settings

- + It is important for adolescents to have routine visits with their physician to ensure they have completed their vaccination program and therefore are protecting their health from being compromised

- + If you or a family member are experiencing a severe coughing fit for a week or longer, contact your health care provider immediately

