

****PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough) ALERT****

Ventura County is currently having a substantial increase in the number of Pertussis (also know as whooping cough) cases. Pertussis begins as a simple cold, but then progresses to a severe cough. In young children, they may have spasms of coughing followed by a high-pitched inspiratory noise called a whoop. This illness is particularly dangerous for infants, especially those under 6 months. Infants will often cough persistently, turn blue, and vomit after coughing. Infants with whooping cough are often hospitalized and unfortunately it can be fatal.

Pertussis is preventable through routine vaccinations, so we highly recommend keeping your child up to date on his/her vaccines. This illness is particularly dangerous for infants, especially those under 6 months who have not received 3 doses of their DTap vaccines. Pertussis is highly contagious and **infants are most commonly infected by family members and caretakers**. It is important for all family members and caretakers to receive a pertussis booster immunization (Tdap) if they have not already received one. If an adult in your household needs a Tdap, call your physician or public health department. If someone in the family contracts pertussis, there are antibiotics available to treat the infection. Any close contacts should also be treated with antibiotics.

What can you do?

*Vaccinate your children

*Any infant with a severe cough should be evaluated in our office

*Make sure all family members and caretakers of infants have received their Pertussis booster (Tdap)

For more information and to hear what Whooping Cough sounds like visit www.cdc.gov/pertussis.