

# Whooping Cough

## What is whooping cough?

- It is a highly contagious bacterial, respiratory infection that spreads from person to person
- It is also known as Pertussis
- It frequently includes a cough which lasts two weeks or more and becomes severe and persistent
- The cough is often accompanied by a whooping sound, especially in children
- The cough may be minimal in some individuals, especially adults, but is persistent

## Can it be prevented?

- Yes, there is a vaccine that is effective in preventing whooping cough
- The vaccine has been used for years and is safe
- The vaccine is first given at 2 months of age and offers protection after 4 doses
- School children need boosters before starting kindergarten and middle school and adults should substitute one dose of Tdap in place of their regular Tetanus booster

## Who is most at risk for serious illness?

- Young children, particularly those under the age of 1 year
- Caregivers and family members in close contact with young children can carry the disease to those who have not been fully vaccinated

## How can we protect infants?

- Caregivers with close contact with very young children can get a booster vaccination
- Caregivers include parents, siblings, relatives and others who provide daily care

## Where can adults obtain a vaccine booster?

- Most primary care offices can provide this vaccination to adults
- Parents may ask if their infant's physician offers this vaccine to adults

## Why is whooping cough a concern now?

- California has had 5 deaths of infants statewide between January and June of 2010
- The number of 2010 cases may reach a 50 year high

For more information go to [www.sbcphd.org](http://www.sbcphd.org)