

Tdap Vaccine

As a parent, you do everything you can to protect your children's health. The Tdap vaccine can help protect not only your child's health but also the health of those around them, like babies who are too young to be vaccinated.

Tdap and whooping cough

The Tdap shot protects against three diseases: tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis or whooping cough.

Whooping cough is the most common of those diseases and spreads very easily through coughing and sneezing. It can cause a bad cough that makes someone gasp for air after coughing fits. This cough can last for many weeks, which can make preteens and teens miss school and other activities. Though not very common, whooping cough can also lead to complications like cracked ribs and pneumonia, even among healthy preteens and teens.

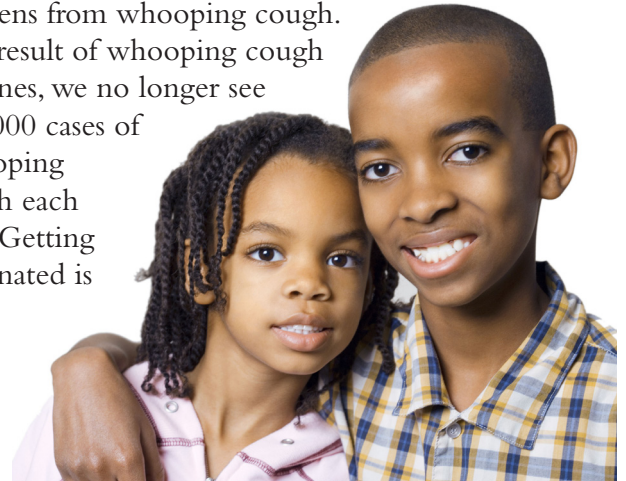
Whooping cough can be deadly for babies, especially those who are too young to have protection from their own vaccines. The majority of reported whooping cough deaths are in babies younger than 3 months old. Often babies get whooping cough from their older brothers or sisters, like preteens or teens, or other people in the family.

Tdap vaccination is recommended for preteens at ages 11-12

All preteens should get one Tdap shot when they are 11 or 12 years old. If your teen is 13 years old up through 18 years old and hasn't gotten the vaccine yet, talk to their doctor about getting it for them right away. Babies and little kids get shots called DTaP to protect them from diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough. But as kids get older, the protection from the DTaP shots starts to wear off. This can put your preteen or teen at risk for serious illness. The Tdap vaccine is a booster shot that helps protect your preteen or teen from the same diseases that DTaP shots protect little kids from.

Whooping cough vaccines work

Even though whooping cough shots don't provide lifelong protection, on time vaccination can still help protect preteens from whooping cough. As a result of whooping cough vaccines, we no longer see 200,000 cases of whooping cough each year. Getting vaccinated is



Is Tdap vaccine safe?

The Tdap shot has been studied very carefully and is safe. It is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine.

The Tdap vaccine can cause mild side effects, like redness and soreness in the arm where the shot was given, headache, fever, or tiredness. Some preteens and teens might faint after getting the Tdap vaccine or any other shot. To help avoid fainting, preteens and teens should sit or lie down when they get a shot and then for about 15 minutes after getting the shot. Serious side effects from reactions to the Tdap shot are rare.

The Tdap vaccine can safely be given at the same time as the other recommended vaccines, including the HPV, meningococcal, and influenza vaccines. Learn more about all of the recommended preteen vaccines at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens.

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the best way to prevent whooping cough and its complications. Those who get a whooping cough shot and still get whooping cough are much more likely to have a mild illness compared to those who never received the vaccine. Vaccinated preteens and teens will have fewer coughing fits, shorter illness, and are less likely to crack a rib or develop pneumonia, among other benefits.

Help paying for vaccines

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines for children ages 18 years and younger who are uninsured, Medicaid-eligible, or American Indian/Alaska Native. Learn more about the VFC program at www.cdc.gov/Features/VFCprogram/

Whether you have insurance, or your child is VFC-eligible, some doctors' offices may also charge a fee to give the vaccines.

Callie's story: "Callie could have caught whooping cough from anyone."

On Christmas Eve 2009, Katie and Craig welcomed their daughter Callie Grace into the world. After trying for 5 years to have a child—and suffering several miscarriages—the couple considered Callie their miracle baby. Callie was born 6 weeks early, but she was healthy and strong and came home after only 2 weeks in the hospital.

In January, when she was a month old, Callie developed a soft, dry cough. "It sounded like when a child mimics their parent to get attention. I took her to the doctor," Katie recalls. The doctor did not find any serious signs of illness, so he sent them home.

However, over the next couple of days, Callie's condition worsened. She continued to cough, and she also became pale, lethargic, and suddenly lost her healthy appetite. Katie took Callie back to the doctor, and while they waited, Callie stopped breathing. A nurse was able to get Callie breathing again, and they were rushed to the hospital by ambulance.

"At the hospital, nurses and doctors flocked to our room," Katie remembers. "It was truly overwhelming. I was scared and Callie was screaming." Callie was admitted to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, where the staff ran tests to try to find out what was wrong. After a couple of days of monitoring, they started her on antibiotics, while still waiting on test results.

During Callie's second day at the hospital, she seemed to be doing better and her parents were hopeful that she'd recover. But the next night, Callie stopped

breathing again. Family members watched helplessly from behind a glass wall as doctors tried for 45 minutes to revive her. Tragically, Callie could not be saved. She was only 5 weeks old. "We never dreamed we'd lose her," Katie said.

A few days later, the family found out that whooping cough was the cause of Callie's death. "We could not believe it," Katie says, "We were so careful to not expose her to a lot of people," Katie says.

The first dose of DTaP vaccine is recommended at 2 months of age but babies are not fully protected until they get all the recommended doses. Callie was too young to even get her first dose of DTaP.

Babies need whooping cough vaccination on time, but there's another important way to protect them. Pregnant women should get Tdap in the 3rd trimester of each pregnancy. Family members and others who are around babies, including child and teenage siblings, should be up-to-date with whooping cough shots.

"Callie could have caught whooping cough from anyone—even from someone in the hospital right after she was born. People with even a slight cough might have whooping cough but not know it. I urge people to be sure they get the Tdap booster shot," Katie says. "Getting that shot could save a life."

For more information about the vaccines recommended for preteens and teens:

800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens