

Whooping Cough

It is not unusual to have a few scattered cases of Whooping Cough in a community. The general population is not at high risk. Babies before the age to receive immunization, persons that have not received immunization for personal or religious reasons, and a small percent of the population that for some reason do not respond positively to the immunization (vaccine failure) are most susceptible. The immune response to the vaccine can weaken over time and if other factors evolve (such as immunosuppression) an immunized person could be susceptible, for this reason a booster is recommended every 10 years.

Whooping Cough generally takes close and prolonged contact, such as persons living in the same home, sharing common living spaces and utensils, etc. to cause the disease.

The main symptom to differentiate Whooping cough from other coughs related to colds, flu, and allergies is that it usually occurs in spasms of multiple coughs, 5 to 20 or more coughs and may cause shortness of breath and cyanosis (bluish tint to skin). Do not expect to always hear a long whoop at the end of a coughing episode, especially in older children and adults.