

Are you protected against Whooping Cough (pertussis)?



- **For a limited time** the North Carolina Immunization Program is offering free Tdap vaccines. (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis)
- The free vaccines are being offered in response to the recent outbreaks of Whooping cough (pertussis) in North Carolina. A single dose is recommended for those ages 11 years and older.
- To receive your free vaccine, make an appointment with **your primary care doctor** (*you may be charged an administration fee*) or the Moore County Health Department.

What is whooping cough?

Whooping cough—or pertussis—is a very serious respiratory (in the lungs and breathing tubes) infection caused by bacteria. It causes violent coughing. Whooping cough is most harmful for young babies and can be deadly.

How serious is whooping cough?

The disease is most dangerous for babies and young children. From 2004 through 2009, there were 121 deaths from whooping cough reported in the U.S. Babies 3 months and younger accounted for 110 of them. More than half of babies younger than 1 year who get the disease need care in the hospital. About 1 out of 5 babies and children with whooping cough will get pneumonia (a serious lung infection). Whooping cough can also cause seizures (jerking or staring) and brain damage.

How does whooping cough spread?

Whooping cough spreads easily through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. A person can spread the disease while he or she has cold-like symptoms and for at least 2 weeks after coughing starts. Many babies and young children get whooping cough from adults or older brothers or sisters who don't know they have the disease. Pregnant women with whooping cough can give it to their newborn babies. **Because whooping cough is so harmful in babies, everyone around them needs to be vaccinated—to make a circle of protection.**