

Get the Facts about the Pertussis Vaccine

FOR PATIENTS



MYTH

BUSTED

Whooping cough (pertussis) only affects infants and children.

In addition to infants and children, whooping cough can affect and cause significant illness among adolescents and adults.

Only children need the whooping cough vaccine.



The CDC recommends that adults get the Tdap vaccine to help prevent whooping cough, in addition to tetanus and diphtheria.

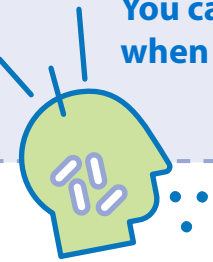
The pertussis vaccine protects only the person who gets the vaccine.

The vaccine protects the people around you who have not received the vaccine by helping develop "herd immunity."



You can transmit whooping cough only when you are very symptomatic.

You can transmit whooping cough even when you are asymptomatic.

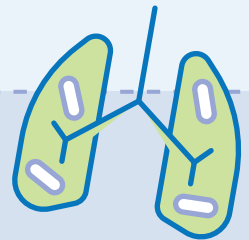


Whooping cough has been eradicated.

Since the 1980s, there has been an increase in the number of reported cases of whooping cough. In 2019, the greatest percentages of affected patients were adolescents and adults.

Whooping cough in adults is mild and does not usually require hospitalization.

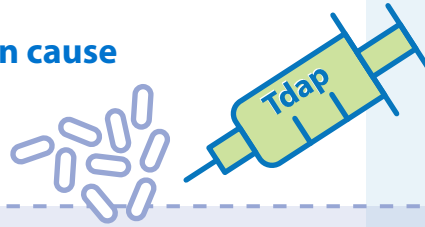
Patients with asthma, COPD, and immunocompromised conditions have greater risk of hospitalizations and complications from whooping cough.



To learn more, go to chestfoundation.org

MYTH

The Tdap vaccine can cause the disease.



A history of having pertussis disease provides lifetime immunity to pertussis.

The current Tdap vaccination rate among adults is good.



There must be at least a 10-year interval between the Td (tetanus and diphtheria) and Tdap vaccinations.

Pertussis vaccination in infants and young children provides lifetime immunity to pertussis. Therefore, adults do not need to be vaccinated.

BUSTED

The Tdap vaccine contains inactivated pertussis antigens, which elicit an immune response in the immunized person but do not cause disease.

Following natural infection, immunity wanes after 7-20 years.

Only one-third (33.4%) of US adults have received the Tdap vaccination.



In adults, for protection against pertussis, Tdap should be administered regardless of the interval since the last tetanus or diphtheria (Td) toxoid-containing vaccine.

Immunity from a Tdap vaccine wanes overtime. Vaccination coverage among adults in the US is still relatively low and needs improvement.



CDC = Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
COPD = chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

To learn more, go to chestfoundation.org