

# Whooping Cough Vaccine Recommendation for Preteens and Teens

*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

Whooping cough is a serious disease that vaccines can help prevent. It was thought to be a disease of the past, but it's making a comeback, with the most cases CDC has seen in 60 years. Since 2010, between 10,000 and 50,000 cases of whooping cough are reported each year in the United States. This is partly because protection offered by the childhood whooping cough vaccine *decreases* as children grow older.

For some preteens and teens, whooping cough is mild and may seem like a common cold. For others, it can cause violent coughing fits that can last for several weeks and even months. The cough can disturb sleep and cause vomiting, broken ribs, a feeling of suffocation, and other complications. Whooping cough can be so severe that adolescents miss a lot of school or are unable to participate in sports or other social activities. Approximately one preteen or teen out of every 20 who gets whooping cough will end up in the hospital.

While whooping cough can be very serious for anyone, it's especially dangerous—even deadly—for babies. Since symptoms can vary, older siblings and adults often don't know they have whooping cough and end up spreading it to babies they are in close contact with.

The best way to prevent whooping cough in preteens and teens is through a booster dose of the whooping cough vaccine, called Tdap. All kids should get a booster when they are 11 or 12. If your adolescent hasn't gotten the vaccine yet, talk to their health care provider about getting it right away.

In addition to whooping cough, Tdap also protects against diphtheria and tetanus. All three infections are caused by bacteria. Diphtheria and whooping cough are spread from person-to-person, while tetanus is found in the environment and enters the body through cuts or wounds. Side effects from the Tdap vaccine are usually mild, and may include fever, headache, or pain, soreness, redness, or swelling at the site of the shot.

For families with health insurance, all or most of the cost of the vaccine is usually covered. The Vaccines for Children, or VFC, program provides vaccines for children ages 18 years and younger who are not insured, Medicaid-eligible, or American Indian or Alaska Native. Parents can find a VFC provider by contacting their local health department.

For more information about vaccines for preteens and teens, please visit [cdc.gov/vaccines/teens](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens).

*[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.*