

## Appendix E

**Whooping Cough***Pertussis***What is whooping cough?**

Whooping cough (*pertussis*) is a respiratory disease that spreads easily by coughing and sneezing.

**How serious is it?**

Whooping cough is most serious for babies. They often have severe coughing spells that make it hard to breathe, eat, drink, and sleep.

In babies, whooping cough can lead to lung infection (*pneumonia*), seizures, brain damage, and death. Of babies who die from whooping cough, 9 out of 10 are under 6 months old.

**How can I protect my baby?**

- Make sure your child gets DTaP shots at these ages:
  - 4 months
  - 6 months
  - 15 to 18 months
  - 4 to 6 years
- Get the Tdap booster vaccine for your child at age 11 to 12 years.
- Get the Tdap vaccine for all members of your family – children, teens, and adults. Babies usually get whooping cough from family or friends who do not know they have it.
- If you become pregnant again, get a Tdap vaccine during the 3rd trimester



*DTaP shots for whooping cough are given 4 times during childhood*

of each pregnancy to best protect your unborn baby. Women who do not get the vaccine during pregnancy should get it right after giving birth.

### **What do these vaccines protect against?**

- DTaP is a vaccine that helps children younger than age 7 develop immunity to 3 deadly diseases caused by bacteria:
  - Diphtheria
  - Tetanus
  - Whooping cough
- Tdap is a booster immunization given at age 11. It gives ongoing protection from those diseases for teens and adults.

### **Child Care and School**

By law, children entering child care or preschool must be up to date with their immunization.

- For kindergarten entry, children must have the complete DTaP vaccine series.
- A dose of Tdap vaccine is required for children to enter the 6th grade.

Call your doctor, nurse, or clinic today to schedule your child's DTaP and your Tdap immunization.

### **To Learn More**

- Visit the Washington State Department of Health website:  
[www.doh.wa.gov/whoopingcough](http://www.doh.wa.gov/whoopingcough)
- Listen to a recording of a child with whooping cough:  
[www.pkids.org/diseases/pertussis.html](http://www.pkids.org/diseases/pertussis.html)

*This information is adapted from "Whooping Cough Is Serious" by the Washington State Department of Health and Child Profile, © January 2016.*

#### **Questions?**

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.