

Whooping Cough (Pertussis): What You Need to Know

There's a Lot of Whooping Cough Going Around!

- Over 700 cases in Ireland in 2024, the highest in 20 years!
- Irish Travellers: 15 cases so far, many not fully vaccinated.

Why Worry About Whooping Cough?

- Babies under 6 months old are most at risk but can get it at any age.
- Serious illness and death: Many needs hospital care.
- It spreads easily through coughs and sneezes.

Protect Your Baby: Get the Vaccine!

- Pregnant women: Get the whooping cough vaccine between 16-36 weeks of pregnancy to protect your baby from birth.
- Babies need their 4 doses as part of their baby needles/vaccines to stay safe.
- Older children also need boosters at 4-5 years and 11-14 years.

Free Vaccines!

- Available free from your GP or GP nurse during pregnancy and your baby's usual needles/vaccine schedule.
- Booster needles/vaccines are given in school by HSE nurses and doctors.

Why Vaccinate?

- It works! The needle/vaccine you get when you are pregnant protects your baby from the minute they are born until they are old enough to get their baby needles/vaccines.
- Baby and booster needles/vaccines protect children while small and for the future.

How to Spot Whooping Cough

- Starts like a cold: runny nose, mild cough, low fever.
- Gets worse: long fits of coughing, choking, gasping for air.
- Babies might not cough but could have breathing trouble or stop breathing.

How can you protect your children?

1. Pregnant? Get your whooping cough needle/vaccine to protect your baby.
2. Parents: Check your children's needles/vaccines are up to date.
3. Contact your local Traveller Primary Health Care Project or Traveller organisation.