

Your child may have been exposed to:

## Pertussis

Pertussis (whooping cough) can be a serious bacterial illness especially in young, unvaccinated children.

### If you think your child has Pertussis:

- Tell your childcare provider or call the school.
- **Need to stay home?**

#### Childcare and School:

**Yes**, until 5 days after your child starts taking antibiotics.

If staff or children are not treated, they need to stay home until 21 days after cough starts.

### Symptoms

Your child may first have a runny nose, sneezing, mild cough, and possibly fever.

After 1 or 2 weeks, your child may cough in explosive bursts. These coughing attacks can end in vomiting and/or in a high-pitched whoop. Coughing attacks occur most often at night. This may last up to three months.

If your child has been infected, it may take 4 to 21 days (usually 7 to 10 days) for symptoms to start.

### Spread

- By coughing or sneezing.

### Contagious Period

From the time of the first cold-like symptoms until 21 days after coughing begin. Antibiotics shorten the time a child with pertussis can give it to others.

### Call your Healthcare Provider

If someone in your home has:

- ◆ had a cough 7 or more days. Laboratory tests may be done. Antibiotics will reduce the contagious period, but may do little to relieve your child's cough.
- ◆ been exposed to pertussis. Also, if public health has recommended that antibiotics are needed because of an exposure.

### Prevention

- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing. Use a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues.
- Wash hands after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the nose or mouth. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- In Minnesota, all children 2 months of age or older enrolled in childcare or school must be vaccinated against pertussis or have a legal exemption. **There is also a pertussis vaccine for adolescents and adults**, especially those who have close contact with children under one year of age.

For more information, call Saint Paul - Ramsey County Department of Public Health at 651-266-1277.