

WHOOPING COUGH

Whooping cough is a highly contagious infection of the respiratory tract caused by the bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*. The disease spreads through droplets in the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs.

If you work in a child care centre or a school, see the [Guide d'intervention: Prévention et contrôle des infections dans le centre de garde et écoles du Québec](#) (PDF) (in french only)

Whom should you contact to get help?

- [Info-santé at 811](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society: Caring for Kids](#)

See also

- [Respiratory infections: pregnant woman and parents of young children](#)

Symptoms

The first signs of infection are a runny nose and cough, which quickly becomes more frequent and intense. In children, severe episodes of coughing often end with a "whoop" sound produced when the child tries to take a breath, hence the name whooping cough. During such episodes, the child's face may take on a bluish colour, and vomiting often follows. Whooping cough is more serious in children under one year old, who often need to be hospitalized for treatment. Symptoms usually last six to ten weeks.

See the [Whooping cough](#) page on the Portail santé mieux-être, where you will find all sorts of information on the disease, its health effects and symptoms, and effective means of prevention like vaccination.

Protection and prevention

The best way to protect yourself against whooping cough is to get vaccinated. See the [Whooping cough](#) on Quebec.ca

It is recommended that children be vaccinated once they are two months old, to protect them at the time when they are most vulnerable. Several doses are required to ensure good short- and long-term protection.

Since 2004, teenagers in the third year of high school are given whooping cough boosters. Teens and adults who have not received boosters should contact their doctor or CLSC to bring their vaccinations up-to-date, especially if they are in contact with young babies.