



## Whooping Cough Fact Sheet

### **What is Whooping Cough?**

- Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, is a serious disease that spreads easily from person to person. Whooping cough can cause coughing that may last for up to 100 days or more, and may lead to vomiting, pneumonia and missed school days.

### **What are the Signs and Symptoms of Whooping Cough?**

- Whooping cough starts off like the common cold.
- Symptoms of whooping cough may include a runny nose, sneezing and mild fever, as well as severe coughing fits that can make it hard to eat, drink, or breathe.
- The whooping sound, which is generally heard in infected babies and children, is not common in preteens and teens.

### **How is Whooping Cough Spread?**

- Whooping cough is spread when a person with the disease coughs or sneezes.
- A student who has whooping cough can easily spread it to their classmates or family members who may be at risk for the disease.

### **Who is at Risk?**

- Many parents may not realize that their preteens and teens may be at risk for whooping cough. Protection against whooping cough begins to wear off five to 10 years after the last routine childhood shot, leaving preteens and teens unprotected.
- Babies who have not received all of their shots for whooping cough are at risk of catching the illness and, in rare cases, can possibly die from the disease. Preteens, teens and adults are often the source of infection for infants.

### **Facts and Figures About Whooping Cough**

- According to results from the 2006 National Immunization Survey, only 11 percent of 13-17 year-olds in the U.S. had been vaccinated against whooping cough.
- More than a quarter of the thousands of whooping cough cases in the U.S. occurred in preteens and teens in 2006.
- On average, preteens and teens with whooping cough miss a week of school.

### **How to Prevent Whooping Cough**

- Whooping cough shots can help prevent the disease. The whooping cough shot is recommended for infants and children, and a booster shot is recommended for preteens and teens.
- Health experts recommend children receive shots to help protect against pertussis typically starting when they are two months old.
- In 2005, health experts recommended that all preteens and teens get a booster shot for continued protection against whooping cough.

**Parents can visit [www.GiveYourKidsABoost.org](http://www.GiveYourKidsABoost.org) for more information about getting their children vaccinated to help keep them healthy and in school.**

GlaxoSmithKline has provided funding and additional assistance to the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) for the "Give Your Kids a Boost!" campaign.