

The PHA have a responsibility to investigate, and control spread of the infection. Hospital clinicians and GPs have a responsibility to report suspected cases to the PHA under Public Health legislation.

Whooping cough is caused by the bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*, and it is spread by coughing and sneezing. Symptoms are usually mild at the start, much like a cold, progressing to outbursts of coughing which can sometimes cause vomiting or choking. The cough sometimes has a characteristic 'whoop' sound.

The most effective way to prevent whooping cough is to be fully vaccinated

Your doctor may prescribe antibiotics to treat whooping cough if the illness started recently. Whooping cough can be spread to others from about six days after the start of cold-like symptoms to three weeks after the cough starts, or until 48 hours after starting the right antibiotics.

If you have been given antibiotics to treat whooping cough, please remember to stay off nursery, school or work, and avoid contact with any young babies or pregnant women until 48 hours after starting antibiotics.

If it is more than three weeks since the start of your illness, starting antibiotics at this time is unlikely to help and you will no longer infect others. If it is more than three weeks since the start of the illness and you are well enough, you can go to work as normal. The cough can last for up to three months or more in some people. If you become concerned, please discuss your symptoms with your doctor.

Further information on pertussis can be found [here](#)

[Cover Your Cough - MN Dept. of Health \(niinfectioncontrolmanual.net\)](http://niinfectioncontrolmanual.net)

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