



Susan Harrington, M.S., R.D.
Director, Department of Public Health

PERTUSSIS

Frequently Asked Questions

An increase in Whooping Cough (Pertussis) is being seen in Riverside County and other jurisdictions in California. Parents are encouraged to protect themselves and their children by getting vaccinated.

What is Whooping Cough (Pertussis)?

- Whooping Cough is an infectious disease caused by bacteria.
- It is easily spread from person to person through close contact.
- It is a very serious illness in infants.

What are the symptoms of Whooping Cough?

- Infants: signs of a cold; runny nose; poor feeding – may not have cough or fever. After a few days may develop respiratory distress (trouble breathing)
- Adolescents & Adults: symptoms start with a cough and runny nose for one to two weeks, and then followed by severe coughing for weeks to months.

How can the public protect themselves?

- Make sure children are up-to-date on their Immunizations
- Obtain a Tetanus booster (Tdap) especially close contacts of unvaccinated infants; pregnant and post-partum women.
- Cover cough and wash hands frequently.

When should vaccine be given?

- Routine schedule: 2 – 4 – 6 Months, 12 – 15 Months, 4 – 6 years of age
- Accelerated schedule: 1st dose at 6 weeks, 2nd and 3rd dose at 4 week intervals.
- The protection of the vaccine decreases by the time children finish middle school, so adolescents and adults need booster shots for whooping cough

**PERTUSSIS
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
PAGE 2**

Where can the public obtain Tdap?

- The public should contact their health provider to discuss vaccinations
- Vaccinations are also available through the Riverside County Public Health Clinics. Call 1-800-720-9553, for clinic locations.

How many cases have been reported in Riverside County?

- Between January 2010 through June 24, 2010, 35 cases have been reported in Riverside County – compared to 17 cases for the same time period in 2009.

What is the geographic and age distribution of cases? See sit stat report

When was the previous increase in Pertussis in Riverside County?

- Sixty Four cases were reported in 2005 compared to 25 in 2004.

Have there been any deaths in Riverside County?

- No deaths reported at this time.

What is Riverside County DOPH doing to address the problem?

- Promoting and offering vaccinations.
- Providing recommendations to the medical community.
- Testing, treatment and vaccinations.
- Investigation of cases
- Conducting enhanced surveillance

Where can the public obtain additional information?

- <http://www.rivcoph.org>