

## PERTUSSIS

### SYMPTOMS

Highly communicable, vaccine preventable disease that lasts for many weeks. Children symptoms are more severe with spasms of coughing, with a whooping sound, and vomiting. In adults may have a persistent cough similar to a bronchitis.

### TRANSMISSION

Occurs through direct contact with discharges from respiratory mucous membranes of an infected person. The respiratory secretions can be expelled up to three feet. People are considered exposed if they are in a room for two hours duration or more while the patient was coughing .

### RISK GROUPS

Infants and toddlers are at greatest risk of complications from pertussis. Pertussis is highly contagious with up to 90% of exposed household contacts develop the disease. People who have been vaccinated may be at risk getting pertussis because the immunity may decrease over time.

### HIGHER LEVEL OF ALERT

People who are exposed to someone with pertussis must observe for signs and symptoms of pertussis for 21 days. If a persistent cough develops the physician should be notified. The physician should be told about the potential exposure to pertussis.