

WHAT IS WHOOPING COUGH?

Whooping cough (also known as pertussis) is a highly contagious infection of the nose and throat. It is spread by coughing and sneezing or direct contact with infected secretions from the nose and mouth. Outbreaks of the disease occur every four to five years. Those most at risk from the disease are babies less than 6 months of age, particularly those less than 3 months of age.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MY BABY FROM WHOOPING COUGH?

Vaccination during pregnancy is the best way to protect yourself and your baby from whooping cough. Vaccination during the third trimester of pregnancy has proved to be over 90% effective in protecting infants less than 3 months of age who are too young to be fully vaccinated.

HOW DOES MY BABY GET PROTECTION FROM ME BEING VACCINATED DURING MY PREGNANCY?

Your baby is protected because after your vaccination you develop protective antibodies that are passed through the placenta to your baby while it is still in the womb.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME DURING MY PREGNANCY TO RECEIVE THE WHOOPING COUGH VACCINE?

The best time to receive the whooping cough vaccine is between 28 and 32 weeks of pregnancy. This is because it takes 2 weeks for you to develop antibodies and transfer of antibodies from mother to baby generally begins at around 30 weeks.

CAN I STILL RECEIVE THE WHOOPING COUGH VACCINE IF I AM MORE THAN 32 WEEKS PREGNANT?

Yes. Whooping cough vaccine can be given at any time during the third trimester. However, if delivery is unexpectedly early, the full benefit to the baby may not be achieved if vaccination is given late in pregnancy.

IF I HAD THE WHOOPING COUGH VACCINE EARLIER THAN 28 WEEKS DO I NEED IT AGAIN AFTER 28 WEEKS IN THE SAME PREGNANCY?

No. There should be sufficient levels of protection transferred across to your baby.

DO I NEED THE WHOOPING COUGH VACCINE WITH EACH PREGNANCY?

Yes. As your immunity declines over time it is better to be revaccinated with each pregnancy to ensure you have high levels of antibodies to transfer across to your baby.

WHAT WHOOPING COUGH VACCINE IS AVAILABLE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN?

The whooping cough vaccines for adults are available in combinations that also protect against diphtheria and tetanus, and have brand names Boostrix® or Adacel®. The adult whooping cough vaccine has been provided free to high school students for the last 10 years as a booster dose of diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. Booster doses are required as protection declines over the years.

HOW SAFE IS THE WHOOPING COUGH VACCINE IN PREGNANCY?

Studies have shown that there is no evidence of any increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes following whooping cough vaccine administered during the third trimester of pregnancy.

The vaccine is generally safe and well-tolerated in adults. However, if there have been repeated doses over a short period of time (such as frequent pregnancies) there is a small risk that you will have a painful red and swollen arm for a few days. This low risk is considered to be balanced by the benefit to each infant of protection against whooping cough.

IF I PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED THE VACCINE IN HIGH SCHOOL DO I STILL NEED TO BE VACCINATED DURING PREGNANCY?

Yes. You still need to be vaccinated during pregnancy. Even if you have been previously vaccinated with Boostrix or Adacel your protective levels decline over time and may be insufficient to protect your baby.

IF I HAVE HAD WHOOPING COUGH DISEASE, DO I STILL NEED THE VACCINE?

Yes. Immunity from the disease is not lifelong and wears off over time.

WHERE CAN I GET IMMUNISED?

The whooping cough vaccine is free for pregnant women in their third trimester. Speak to your doctor or midwife.

For other family members or close contacts, the vaccine is NOT free. They can access the vaccine through a prescription from their GP.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I CAN DO TO PROTECT MY BABY FROM WHOOPING COUGH?

Yes. Have your baby receive all their whooping cough vaccines on time at 6 weeks, 4 months and 6 months of age.

Anyone who will have close contact with your baby should also be immunised. This includes fathers, grandparents, carers and any other adult or child who will have close contact with your baby in the early weeks of life. It is recommended to have the vaccine at least 2 weeks before beginning close contact with your baby.

**Immunisation Section, SA Health,
Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm on 1300 232 272.**

WHOOPIING COUGH VACCINATION
IN THE THIRD TRIMESTER OF
PREGNANCY IS THE FIRST STEP
YOU CAN TAKE TO PROVIDE EARLY
PROTECTION FOR YOUR BABY
AGAINST WHOOPING COUGH.

THE SECOND STEP IS TO
MAKE SURE YOU HAVE YOUR
BABY VACCINATED ON TIME
AT 6 WEEKS, 4 MONTHS AND
6 MONTHS OF AGE.

VACCINATE
FROM 28

Immunisation Section, SA Health
PO Box 6, Rundle Mall SA 5000
Telephone 1300 232 272
sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisation

References: The Australian Immunisation Handbook
10th Edition Update 2015.
<http://immunise.health.gov.au/>

If you require this information in an alternative language
or format, please contact SA Health via the details provided
above and they will make every effort to assist you.



VACCINATE
FROM 28