Pertussis is also called whooping cough. It is a very serious illness that can be easily passed on to others. It is especially dangerous to infants less than 6 months of age. Pertussis has become more common in recent years.

There are vaccines to protect against pertussis. Starting at 2 months of age, babies receive a series of DTaP vaccines that protect against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis. Full protection by the vaccines is not reached until children are about 2 years old. This leaves babies at risk for pertussis.

Adults, teens, and preteens need to be revaccinated against pertussis even if they have been vaccinated as children. Protection from the infant vaccines wears off by the teenage years, so adults who are in close contact with babies are the most likely to give pertussis to them.

All adults who will spend time with your baby should make certain that they are up-to-date with their own pertussis vaccines. This may include parents (mom and dad), guardians, grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, caregivers, and babysitters.

Vaccination Information

- The adult vaccine that protects against pertussis is called Tdap. It also protects against tetanus and diphtheria. They work well but are not 100% effective.
- Pregnant women who have not had the vaccine should get it in the late second or third trimester of pregnancy.
- Other family members and caregivers should get this vaccine at least 2 weeks before coming into contact with the baby.
- Family doctors and the local health department give the vaccines.

Columbus Health Department
240 Parsons Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43215
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Help keep your baby safe:

- Ask your doctor about getting the pertussis vaccine.
- Make certain those around your baby have had the vaccine.
- Keep your baby away from anyone who has cold symptoms or is coughing.