

This leaflet gives general advice. For further information please ask either the nursing or medical staff who are providing your care and treatment or contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team on 01386 502552.

If you would like this leaflet in a different language, larger print size, in audio, Braille or any other format please contact the

PALS team by phone on

☎01905 760020;

by letter ✉ Communications,
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2 Kings Court, Charles Hasting Way,
Worcester. WR5 1JR.

or by email 📧:

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**Worcestershire
Health and Care**
NHS Trust



WHOOPIING COUGH

What is it?

Your questions answered

**An Information Leaflet
for
Patients and Staff**

WHAT IS IT?

Whooping cough (pertussis) is a chest infection caused by a bacteria. It is most common in children but can occur at any age.

HOW DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE HAS IT?

Initial symptoms are of catarrh and a cold which then develops into a cough. Children often whoop or vomit after a spasm of coughing. Young children can become quite exhausted by the coughing and may have difficulty in feeding because of it. The illness may last for a number of weeks and severe cases, although rare, can occasionally result in brain damage, or death.

IS IT INFECTIOUS?

Yes. People with whooping cough are infectious from 2 to 4 days before they start coughing and up to 21 days afterwards. Antibiotics shorten the infectious period to 5 days if started early in the illness.

WHAT IS THE INCUBATION PERIOD?

The time taken from contact with the germ until infection is usually between 7 and 10 days.

IS THERE ANY TREATMENT?

The main treatment is care of sick children by observation, lifting them if they cough, preventing inhalation of vomit and feeding as necessary. Some children may need to be nursed in hospital. Antibiotics can help in some cases.

CAN WHOOPING COUGH BE PREVENTED?

Yes. Whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine is part of the routine childhood vaccination schedule given at 2, 3 and 4 months. It provides very good protection against whooping cough. A further booster is also given with the pre-school boosters.

HOW SOON CAN THE PERSON RETURN TO WORK/THE CARE SETTING?

As soon as they are recovered and feel well.

