Illness & Injury

Pertussis (whooping cough) among infants

Pertussis is an endemic disease with peaks occurring every two to five years: 2005, 2009 and 2012 (see Figure 1). Infants have the highest reported incidence of pertussis, and they are most likely to have severe cases, with hospitalization, intensive care, and sometimes death.

![Figure 1](image)

Pertussis among infants < 1 year old, Oregon, 2000–2013

Source: Orpheus - Oregon Reportable Diseases Database

Pertussis is the only vaccine-preventable disease that has proved painfully persistent despite widespread childhood immunization and use of antibiotics. Vaccination is recommended for infants at 2, 4, and 6 months of age. Infants younger than 6 months are therefore incompletely vaccinated. Vaccination of
women during each pregnancy is recommended so that they can develop antibodies against pertussis that are transferred across the placenta to their babies in the womb. This gives even very young infants some protection against pertussis.

Additional Resources: Pertussis (whooping cough) disease details

About the Data: Data source is the Oregon reportable diseases database known as “Orpheus.” Data include confirmed and presumptive cases of pertussis among infants.

Confirmed: Culture-positive and an acute cough illness of any duration or PCR-positive and a cough illness lasting at least 2 weeks with any of the following: paroxysms of cough, inspiratory “whoop” or post-tussive vomiting.

Presumptive: Linked epidemiologically to a confirmed case and a cough illness lasting at least 2 weeks with any of the following: paroxysms of coughing, inspiratory “whoop” or post-tussive vomiting.

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Date Updated: June 30, 2014

Oregon State Health Profile

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