

Lightning Learning: Whooping Cough



 em3.org.uk



@EM3FOAMed

#EM3

East Midlands Emergency Medicine Educational Media

STOP!

THIS IS A
NOTIFIABLE DISEASE

In England (UK) there were 2,947 laboratory confirmed cases of *Pertussis* reported to Public Health England in 2018, with peak cases occurring from July to September.

Incidence remains highest in infants under 3 months who are most at risk of severe disease but are too young to be fully immunised.

Causative bacteria: *Bordetella Pertussis*

Alternative name: Pertussis, 100 day cough


Method of distribution: aerosol droplets

Incubation period: 7 days

Infectious period: 3 weeks after onset of cough

ARRANGE ADMISSION IF THE PERSON...

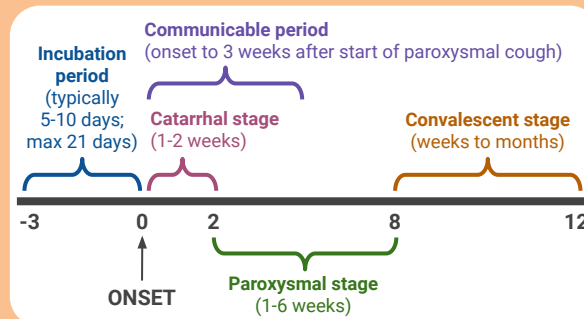
- Is 6 months of age (or younger) and acutely unwell
- Has significant breathing difficulties (e.g. apnoea, severe paroxysms, or cyanosis)
- Has significant complication (e.g. seizures or pneumonia)

 **NOTE:** inform the hospital of the need for appropriate isolation before the person is admitted.

LOOK

3 PHASES OF SYMPTOMS

1. **Catarrhal phase** (*one week productive cough*)
2. **Paroxysmal phase** (*cough, cough induced vomits & audible whoop*)
3. **Convalescent phase**



INVESTIGATIONS

Cultures: Nasopharyngeal, pernasal or nasopharyngeal aspirates sent for cultures. *Negative cultures do not exclude disease.*

Serology: Anti-pertussis IgG antibodies if in doubt about diagnosis to be taken 2 weeks after cough onset. *Suitable for older children who have not had immunisations within a year.*

PCR for pertussis: Nasopharyngeal or throat swabs to confirm infection in people of all ages with symptoms of less than a 3 week duration.

LEARN

TREATMENT

- Advise rest, adequate fluid intake, paracetamol and ibuprofen for symptomatic relief.
- **Prescribe antibiotics**, macrolides such as Clarithromycin **within 21 days of cough onset** – this will not affect severity or duration but will *reduce transmission*.
- **Consider prophylactic antibiotics** in vulnerable close contacts (e.g. newborn infants born to symptomatic mothers, unimmunised children).
- Advise that children and healthcare workers who have **suspected or confirmed whooping cough should stay off nursery, school, or work** until 48 hours of appropriate treatment has been completed, or 21 days after onset of symptoms if not treated.

REFERENCES

Whooping cough (NICE) <http://bit.ly/2nN4FLj>

Notifiable diseases and causative organisms: how to report (GOV.UK) <http://bit.ly/2ozNDRb>

Laboratory confirmed cases of Pertussis (England): annual report for 2018 (Public Health England) <http://bit.ly/2mVfZoK>