

## New Moms Need Tdap Protection

In 2010, California is on pace to have the highest number of pertussis (whooping cough) cases in 50 years. The number of whooping cough cases so far this year is more than four times the number for the same period last year. Young infants are most vulnerable to the devastating effects of pertussis. Thousands of infant hospitalizations are anticipated. Already several newborns have died. In most cases, infants catch pertussis from a family member or household contact. So, it is important to make sure that everyone is protected from pertussis by vaccination – children, adolescents, and adults, especially those with close contact with infants. Neither vaccination or illness from whooping cough provides lifetime immunity.

The new [pertussis flyer for pregnant women](#) and other resources can be found below. In the meantime, please consider to:

### Prevent pertussis with Tdap

- Immunizing your patients is key to protecting their newborns from pertussis disease.
- To "cocoon" new babies with protection, these people need pertussis vaccine at least 2 weeks before contact with an infant
- All close contacts of the infant (mom, dad, siblings, relatives, child care providers, etc)
- Health care workers
- Immunity from the disease and the vaccine wanes, so Tdap booster shots are necessary.
- The [CDPH Tdap Expansion Program](#) provides Tdap free of charge for birthing hospitals for postpartum mothers and close household contacts. For more details, click [here](#).

### Tdap can be given:

- Before pregnancy (ideal)
- During pregnancy (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester preferred)
- After pregnancy (even while breastfeeding) (Any new mother who is not up-to-date, should be given Tdap vaccine post-partum before discharge from the hospital or birthing center.)

### Think pertussis, test for pertussis, treat for pertussis

- Pertussis typically starts with mild, cold-like respiratory symptoms. It may be difficult to distinguish its presentation from that of other respiratory illnesses.
- Typically symptoms progress to severe and prolonged coughing attacks that may consist of:
  - Post-tussive apnea
  - Post-tussive vomiting
  - A high-pitched "whoop"
  - Sweating episodes
- Recognizing pertussis early and treating your patients with antibiotics can prevent further spread and save lives.

California Department of Public Health (CDPH): [Declaration of Pertussis Epidemic Tdap Expansion Program](#)

MMWR Article: Prevention of Pertussis, Tetanus, and Diphtheria Among Pregnant and Postpartum Women and Their Infants (MMWR; May 30, 2008 / 57 (04);1-47,51)

CDPH Pertussis Information and Links: [Pertussis and Tdap information](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Information and Links: [Pertussis and Tdap information Pertussis Flyer for Pregnant Women \(English\)](#)