**Pertussis** (Whooping Cough)

According to the Centers for Disease Control, “Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory disease. It is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*.”

Pertussis is known for uncontrollable, violent coughing which often makes it hard to breathe. After fits of many coughs, someone with pertussis often needs to take deep breaths which result in a “whooping” sound. Pertussis most commonly affects infants and young children and can be fatal, especially in babies less than 1 year of age.” [1]

Last year, there were more than 1,600 reported cases of whooping cough in Iowa – the third highest per-population rate in the country and seventh in total cases. [2]

**How to protect yourself and your family**

According the Centers for Disease Control, the best way to prevent whooping cough is via immunization through vaccines. “Before pertussis vaccines became widely available in the 1940s, about 200,000 children got sick with it each year in the U.S. and about 9,000 died as a result of the infection. Now we see about 10,000-25,000 cases reported each year and unfortunately about 10-20 deaths.” [3] That’s a decrease in mortality of more than 99 percent!

**How to protect your infant**

Infants are at the greatest risk for getting pertussis and suffering severe complications, including death. About half of infants younger than 1 year old who get pertussis are hospitalized. And out of 100 hospitalized infants, one or two cases will be fatal.

Here are just a few ways to protect your infant against whooping cough:

- If you are pregnant, help protect your baby by receiving a Tdap shot preferably sometime between week 27 and 36 of your pregnancy.

- Make sure your baby gets all five doses of the whooping cough vaccine on time.

- Make sure everyone around the infant is immunized. This includes parents, siblings, grandparents, other family members, babysitters, etc. “They should get the age-appropriate vaccine (DTaP or Tdap) at least two weeks before coming into close contact with the infant.” [3]
**What Dahl’s can do for you**

Dahl’s Pharmacies are approved by the state of Iowa to administer vaccines in accordance to the guidelines of The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. Talk to your local Dahl’s Pharmacist about getting your vaccine and what we can do to help you and your loved ones be protected.

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[3] [http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/faqs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/faqs.html)