



News Release

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Whooping cough outbreak growing in Washington

Department of Health urges everyone, especially pregnant women, to get Tdap vaccine

OLYMPIA — [Whooping cough is on the rise in Washington](#) and state health officials are urging people to get vaccinated against the disease, especially pregnant women.

So far in 2015 there have been 319 cases of whooping cough reported compared to 49 reported cases during the same time in 2014. Whooping cough (pertussis) is a serious disease that affects the respiratory system and is spread by coughing and sneezing. Rates of whooping cough are continuing to rise in several areas around the state, which is a concern to health officials.

While everyone is encouraged to get vaccinated against the disease, newborn babies who are too young to be vaccinated are at high risk for severe disease. That's why it's especially important that pregnant women get vaccinated during each pregnancy, toward the end of their pregnancy, to best protect their newborn.

“Women who are pregnant should be sure to talk to their health care provider, doctor, or midwife about getting their Tdap vaccine before they give birth,” said Dr. Scott Lindquist, communicable disease epidemiologist for the state Department of Health “It's also important that everyone else in the family is vaccinated to keep babies safe.”

The best way to protect yourself and your family against whooping cough is vaccination. Your health care provider can determine if you have the highest recommended level of protection. While the vaccine provides protection against whooping cough, the level of protection can decrease as time passes after vaccination. This means it's very important that children and adults have all the recommended doses for the best protection against whooping cough.

If you are around people at high risk for whooping cough, it's important to know that it takes about two weeks following vaccination to be fully protected. Getting vaccinated protects both the

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person getting the shot and other people around them at highest risk for complications, like babies and pregnant women.

The [Department of Health website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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