

- ▶ Whooping cough is caused by the bacteria ***Bordetella pertussis***. Whooping cough is also called 'pertussis' by some doctors.
- ▶ The early symptoms of whooping cough are just like common cold, with a **runny or blocked nose, mild fever and cough**. The cough then gets worse, and severe coughing fits can make people **gasp or 'whoop'** as they struggle to get air into their lungs.
- ▶ Whooping cough spreads very quickly. You are **most infectious in the first three weeks**, before you know that you have whooping cough. Those most at risk of infection are the people you live with or spend most of your time with.
- ▶ **Vaccination** is the only way to stop people getting really sick from whooping cough.
- ▶ Newborn babies can't be immunised and are still at risk of catching whooping cough. **Babies can get really sick or even die from whooping cough.**
- ▶ In Australia, children get vaccinated against whooping cough, tetanus and diphtheria at **6-8 weeks, 4 months, 6 months and 4 years of age**. We recommend a **booster vaccine at 18 months** and for anyone who may come into contact with a newborn baby - dads, siblings, grandparents and carers.
- ▶ Vaccinating mothers in the last half of every pregnancy reduces the risk of a baby getting whooping cough by 90%. A free booster vaccination against whooping cough is available for all pregnant mothers in Australia. **Ask your doctor or contact us for more information.**