

## Whooping Cough Information

We've been asked by the Health Protection Hub at Telford & Wrekin Council to send out some information regarding whooping cough. There has been a continued increase in whooping cough (pertussis) cases at the start of this year, with 553 confirmed in England in January, compared with 858 cases for the whole of last year (2023). The current increase is coming at a time when there has been a steady decline in uptake of the vaccine in pregnant women and in children.

Whooping cough is a bacterial infection which affects the lungs. The first signs of infection are similar to a cold, such as a runny nose and sore throat, but after about a week, the infection can develop into coughing bouts that last for a few minutes and are typically worse at night. Young babies may also make a distinctive "whoop" or have difficulty breathing after a bout of coughing. More detailed information is available here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/whooping-cough/>

Whooping cough can affect people of all ages but for very young infants, it can be particularly serious. However, you can help protect your children by ensuring they receive their vaccines at the right time or catching up as soon as possible if they have missed any. If you're unsure, please check your child's red book or get in touch with your GP surgery. In addition, vaccinating pregnant women is highly effective in protecting babies from birth until they can receive their own vaccines.

The whooping cough vaccine is routinely given as part of the:

- 6-in-1 vaccine – for babies at 8, 12 and 16 weeks
- 4-in-1 pre-school booster – for children aged 3 years 4 months

If you're pregnant you should also have the whooping cough vaccine – ideally between 16 and 32 weeks. Find out more about the whooping cough vaccination in pregnancy

If anyone in your family is diagnosed with whooping cough, it's important they stay at home and do not go into work, school or nursery until 48 hours after starting antibiotics, or 3 weeks after symptoms start if they have not had antibiotics. This helps to prevent the spread of infection, especially to vulnerable groups. However, vaccination remains the best protection for babies and children.

The NHS logo consists of the letters 'NHS' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, enclosed within a white rectangular border. The logo is centered on a solid blue background.

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