Strategies for Preventing Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
Adapted from The Speakers’ Bureau
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
What is Whooping Cough?

• Disease is characterized by inexorable spasms of coughing, with a protracted course
  – Contagious disease-can spread from coughs or sneezes
  – Begins with mild cold-like symptoms
  – After week or 2 can lead to more serious problems
  – Vaccine-preventable disease
  – Also called pertussis
How Is Whooping Cough Treated?

• In adults:
  – 80-90% recover without treatment within 3-4 weeks
  – Those without treatment can infect others
  – Antibiotics
  – Preventive antibiotics for exposed individuals
How Is Whooping Cough Treated?

• In infants:
  – Antibiotics
  – Hospitalization
  – Monitoring
  – Preventive antibiotics for exposed individuals
Background: Complications

- Pneumonia
  - 9.5% (infants < 2 mos, 25%)

- Seizures
  - 1.4%

- Encephalopathy
  - 0.2%

- Death
  - 0.2% (infants < 2 mos, 1%)

- Hospitalization
  - 32% (infants < 2 mos, 82%)
Whooping Cough in California

- There is an epidemic of pertussis in CA
  - 6,795 cases reported as of November 16, 2010
  - The largest number of cases reported in California since 1947
- Greater increase in CA than other states
  - One of 11 states that has not required middle school Tdap booster
Whooping Cough in LA County

• As of September 24, 2010:
  – 994 possible cases
  – 591 cases laboratory confirmed, suspected, or probable
  – 4 deaths
• 156 cases in 2009
Infant pertussis cases by age in months -- California, 2010*

*As of 11/9/2010
Number of reported pertussis cases by year of onset – California 1947-2010*

Previous peak in 1947
number of cases: 9,394

Previous peak in 1958
incidence: 26.0/100,000

6,631 cases
16.9/100,000

*As of 11/9/2010
The Pertussis Comeback

• Infected adolescents and adults expose infants, who are at greatest risk for complications

• Sources of infants’ infection:
  – Sibling: 41%
  – Mother: 38%
  – Father 17%
  – Remainder unknown

“Cocooning”

• The practice of vaccinating adult and adolescent household contacts around the newborn infant

• Evidence that it will help prevent the spread of pertussis to infants
Who Should Get a Whooping Cough Vaccination?

• Vaccination is the best form of prevention.
• Five doses of DTaP for children at age 2, 4, 6, 15-18 months, and 4-6 years
• 1 dose of Tdap for pre-teens (11-12 years of age), adults, and anyone who is 7 years of age and older who is not fully immunized
• Especially important for certain groups:
  – Those who care for infants
  – Women of childbearing age, before, during or immediately following pregnancy
  – Healthcare personnel
Who Recommends These Vaccines?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
How Effective are the Vaccines?

• Most effective form of prevention
• Children with 3-4 doses of DTaP are 80-85% less likely to develop whooping cough
• Tdap is similarly effective
Can I Be Vaccinated During Pregnancy?

• Tdap vaccines are recommended for women of childbearing age before, during or immediately following pregnancy
  – Preferably in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} trimester
• During the epidemic, unvaccinated women should be vaccinated during pregnancy
• CDC recommends that unvaccinated women receive the vaccine immediately post-partum
• Tdap is safe during breastfeeding
Where Can I Get Vaccinated?

- Your regular health care provider
- If you do not have insurance or a regular source of care:
  - Dial 2-1-1
  - Visit [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip)
  - Receive referrals for locations offering low-cost or free of charge vaccinations
For More Information Contact...

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