

Pertussis Vaccine for Families of Infants

Congratulations on the birth of your baby! We are excited to begin or continue our relationship with you and your child as we provide pediatric care for your family.

We encourage parents and caregivers of infants to obtain **pertussis vaccination booster** for themselves as soon as possible after birth of the new baby. Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a serious bacterial infection of the lungs. Young infants who get pertussis are at risk for lung damage, brain damage and death. Infant vaccines include pertussis (the “P” of DaPT vaccine), but it takes a series of vaccines over months for the infant’s immune system to give full protection.

Immunity from pertussis vaccination in early childhood wears off by about age ten. Pertussis infection in older children or adults causes a prolonged cough but is often unrecognized, incorrectly assumed to be a bad cold. We know that most babies who get pertussis catch it from a parent, sibling or caregiver.

Therefore, we recommend that parents and caregivers of infants receive a Tdap booster. This is a combination tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis vaccine, and counts as a tetanus booster as well. Most mothers will have received a Tdap vaccine late in their pregnancy. The vaccine will cause the mother’s immune system to make protective antibodies against the whooping cough bacteria. These antibodies will protect the mother from the disease and will be passed to the baby before birth to help protect him after he is born. Siblings age 10 and up should also receive Tdap vaccine.

Please contact your health care provider as soon as possible and discuss a Tdap vaccine booster for **everyone** over age 10 who interacts with your baby.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have about this vaccine recommendation, or any other matter that concerns you!

If your family physician does not stock Tdap vaccine, the Family Health Centers listed below have Tdap available:

Highlands Family Health Center	Hampton NJ	735-2594
Delaware Family Health Center	Milford NJ	995-2251
Phillips Barber Family Health Center	Lambertville NJ	609-397-3535
Hunterdon Family Medicine	Flemington NJ	788-6161
Riverfield Family Health Center	Clinton NJ	735-4645
	Washington N	689-3200
Branchburg Family Health Center	Somerville NJ	369-8871
Cornerstone Family Health Center	Flemington NJ	788-8220
Hopewell Family Health Center	Hopewell NJ	609-466-1101
	Pennington NJ	609-730-1771