



A vaccination provides protection against the disease for a few years. Because the Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) recommends pertussis vaccinations, health insurance companies cover incurrent costs.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask your physician.

PATIENT INFORMATION

Supplied by:

Practice stamp

Please note that information regarding reimbursement is only valid for patients who are either members of German statutory or private health insurance.

Patients covered by statutory health insurances:

Some medical services are as a matter of principle not or not in every case (e.g. upon the patient's individual request) covered by health insurance providers. In these cases, patients have to bear the costs themselves. Current prices are to be found on the order form for individual health care services.

Patients covered by private health insurances:

Private insurance companies cover the costs in accordance with the German Scale of Medical Fees (GÖA), unless such benefits had been explicitly excluded from a policy. Your physician will be happy to answer any questions on the matter.

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PATIENT INFORMATION

Pertussis Whooping Cough

Vaccinations provide protection
for you and your baby



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Whooping Cough – Pertussis

Whooping cough is a disease that may last several weeks and months and is caused by *Bordetella pertussis*, a bacterium.

Symptoms

The illness usually begins with flu-like symptoms, such as sneezing and slight coughing, which are then followed by severe coughing fits and nausea after a few days.

In general, adults experience milder symptoms than infants and small children. By contrast, especially infants may suffer from coughing fits strong enough to cause respiratory stops (with potentially fatal consequences). Additionally, secondary bacterial infections may exacerbate the course of disease.

Adults and adolescents often perceive a pertussis infection as a long-lasting cough without severe coughing fits.

Studies indicate that 10 - 30% of chronic coughing patients suffering from coughs for a period longer than six days came down with whooping cough.

There is a risk of reinfection with *Bordetella pertussis*. Unlike previously assumed, having endured an infection during infancy does not provide lifelong protection.

Hence, especially new parents, grandparents and other people, who are suffering from undetected whooping cough, may expose new-born or non-vaccinated children to the disease and thus put them at risk.

For how long do patients remain infectious?

Contagiousness starts with the incubation period's end (the time between infection and the occurrence of first symptoms, in context with pertussis normally 7 - 20 days) and lasts up to six weeks after the symptoms' onset. Afterwards, patients usually cease to be infectious.

Diagnosis

A pertussis diagnosis can be achieved with direct pathogen detection from a throat swab during the infection's early stage (the first two to three weeks). In that period, the infection can still be treated with antibiotics. In subsequent phases, the detection of antibodies in blood facilitates the diagnosis, but antibiotic treatment would not be effective at this stage.

How do I protect others and myself?

The **vaccine** against pertussis has been available for several years.

The Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) recommends vaccinations for both children and adults. Especially infants should be vaccinated as early as possible, meaning immediately after the second month of age.

Adults should receive a combined pertussis vaccine at the latest when the next tetanus vaccination is due (booster vaccination). Since neither an infection nor vaccinations will result in life-long immunity, continuous medical prevention is imperative.