

# PERTUSSIS PATHOCHART

## PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a highly contagious bacterial respiratory infection that causes severe coughing fits. It can affect people of all ages, but is most severe in infants and toddlers. For adults, it presents as a mild cold or cough, but in young children the hacking cough can be so severe that they are unable to breathe. It can last for weeks or months, putting the patient's respiratory integrity in jeopardy. Pertussis is easily prevented with a vaccine.



## ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- "Whooping" sound when breathing
- Persistent strong cough
  - May cause vomiting
  - Leads to fatigue
- Labored breathing
- Nasal congestion / discharge
- Fever

## DIAGNOSTICS

- Clinical findings
- Nasal swab
- Serology studies

## NURSING PRIORITIES

- Support immune system function
- Prevent spread of infection
- Ensure adequate oxygenation

## THERAPEUTIC MANAGEMENT

- Droplet precautions
- Supportive respiratory care
- Preventative vaccine
- Educate family on prevention of spread
- Antimicrobial therapy

## MEDICATION THERAPY

- Antibiotics - macrolides