



TOI TE ORA
PUBLIC HEALTH
Bay of Plenty + Lakes Districts



Lifelong health + wellbeing for all

Whooping cough (pertussis)

Information for schools/ kura

Whooping cough is a highly infectious disease, caused by bacteria. It is spread through coughing and sneezing. It is a serious childhood illness especially for babies and infants. You can help prevent the spread of whooping cough and protect your school/ kura and wider community in the following ways:

Whooping Cough Information and Advice

- Immunisation against whooping cough is the best prevention. Students need to be up-to-date with their immunisations. If they have missed a vaccination, it is never too late to catch up. Talk to your doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider.
- Parents should make sure babies have their first immunisations on time at 6 weeks, 3 months and 5 months of age. Free boosters are available at 4 years, 11 years, 45 years and 65 years of age.
- All pregnant women can get a free whooping cough immunisation in the second and third trimester of their pregnancy. Pregnant women can discuss this with their doctor, lead maternity carer or pharmacist.
- If a student has any of the symptoms below, they should see their doctor, nurse or health provider:
 - a cough lasting more than 2 weeks
 - sudden coughing attacks especially if they end in vomiting or a 'whoop' sound
 - breathlessness
- People with whooping cough are infectious until they have had antibiotics for 2 to 5 days depending on the antibiotic prescribed. If they are not treated, they are infectious until 3 weeks after the cough started. During this infectious period a student with whooping cough:
 - should not attend school
 - should avoid contact with babies, young children and pregnant women. If women in the late stages of pregnancy develop whooping cough, there is a risk they may infect their newborn babies.
- Cover your cough and practice good hand hygiene to prevent the spread of illness.

For more information, phone 0800 IMMUNE (466 863) or visit the Toi Te Ora Public Health website: www.toiteora.govt.nz/whooping-cough