

Natural Immunity

Protect your baby Protect your family Protect your community

You protect your baby during your pregnancy by eating right, not smoking, and exercising. You also protect your baby by passing defenses to the baby during your pregnancy. While you are pregnant your body's own antibodies pass through the placenta to the baby. You can use this natural process to protect your baby even after your baby is born.

Whooping cough (pertussis) is a serious lung infection. Older children will have a severe and persistent cough but infants respond differently. Many infants don't cough at all when infected with whooping cough, but instead it can cause them to stop breathing because their airways become congested. About half of babies younger than 1 year old who get whooping cough are hospitalized. Since 2010, in the United States, 10-20 babies die each year from whooping cough. Most whooping cough deaths are among babies who are too young to be protected by their own vaccination.

Fortunately, you can use your own body's ability to produce antibodies and protect your baby. When the mother gets an immunization for whooping cough in the third trimester of pregnancy, she produces a surge of antibodies against the disease. That surge of antibodies crosses the placenta and the antibodies are now available to protect your infant for the first two months of their life until they can get their own vaccine. You further protect your baby with high levels of antibodies in your breast milk.

The number of new cases of whooping cough is rising. Since 2010 the number of cases has ranged from 10,000 to 50,000 cases per year. This is the highest number of cases in 60 years. Getting a Tdap immunization in the third trimester of your pregnancy will protect you and your baby naturally!