

Whooping cough is an infectious bacterial disease that causes uncontrollable coughing. The name comes from the noise you make when you take a breath after you cough. You may have choking spells or may cough so hard that you vomit.

Anyone can get whooping cough, but it is more common in infants and children. It's especially dangerous in infants. The coughing spells can be so bad that it is hard for infants to eat, drink or breathe.

Before there was a vaccine, whooping cough was one of the most common childhood diseases and a major cause of childhood deaths in the U.S. There are fewer cases today because there are both pertussis-only vaccines and combination vaccines for tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. If you have whooping cough, treatment with antibiotics may help if given early.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention