Whooping Cough is a very contagious respiratory tract infection caused by a bacteria called *Bordetella pertussis*. Most children are safe from this disease if they have received all of their DTaP shots. Immunity from the DTaP does not last a lifetime, so teenagers and adults are at risk for getting whooping cough. It is recommended that all adults and teenagers get immunized every 10 years with Tdap to help their immunity. Antibiotics are used to treat your child’s whooping cough, as well as prevent the spread of infection to others. It is important to give your child every dose of this prescribed medicine.

**Symptoms of whooping cough include:**

- Runny nose and congestion, similar to a common cold at the start
- Long coughing spells – the child may not be able to breathe well during these spells. At the end of the coughing spell, a "whoop" sound may be heard. This is caused by the child taking a breath after coughing. "Whoops" are seen in only a small number of children less than 3 months of age.
- Vomiting after coughing
- Children under 6 months of age may have gagging, gasping for air, or periods of not breathing due to the infection.
- Other symptoms may include:
  - Decrease appetite
  - Mild fever
  - Fatigue and less interest in playing

**Things to do at home:**

- Keep your child’s head elevated during sleep. For babies in cribs, this can be done by placing a pillow or rolled blanket under the mattress of the crib. You can also adjust the head of the crib higher than the foot of the crib.
- Hold your child upright during coughing spells.
- If you see mucus in the mouth, gently suction with a bulb syringe only at the corners of his mouth. More vigorous suctioning may make him cough more.
- Give your child small frequent feedings.
- Be sure your baby has at least 6 wet diapers in 24 hours. Be sure older children urinate at least 4 times in 24 hours.
- Give acetaminophen (Tylenol®) if your child has a fever. Be sure to follow the package insert for the right dose for your child’s age and weight. Do not give more than 5 doses in 24 hours.
- Keep your child's room quiet.
- Wash your hands before and after caring for your child.
• Wash the bulb syringe with warm soapy water every day.
• Limit visitors. Do not allow other children or adults around your child until he has taken antibiotics for 5 days.

Antibiotics will be given to all the people who live in the same house. This is to prevent the spread of infection. It is important for them to take all of their antibiotics.

Call your child’s doctor or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if your child:

• Is not able to drink _______________ in 12 hours.
• Does not have 6 wet diapers in 24 hours or urinates at least 4 times in 24 hours.
• Vomits after every cough.
• Becomes blue in the face or around the mouth when coughing.
• Is breathing too fast or too slow.
• Is having periods of gagging or gasping.

Call 911 and give CPR if your child stops breathing.