

MEDIA RELEASE

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Whooping cough boosters to protect all

Booster immunisation against whooping cough (pertussis) is necessary to protect adolescents and adults against the disease especially during epidemics, according to respiratory experts.

Childhood immunisation has been effective in preventing whooping cough, but our immunity wanes as we get older, write Dr Julie Marchant and Professor Anne Chang of the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane, in the latest edition of ***Australian Prescriber***.

Whooping cough is now more common in people aged 15 years and over than it is in younger children, and might be more widespread than we realise. This may be because older patients often do not have the characteristic whoop with their cough.

“Adolescent and adult vaccination is an effective means of controlling the spread of whooping cough and will have health benefits within the community,” the authors write.

Current Australian recommendations are that children should be immunised at two, four and six months of age with a booster at four years of age and another booster at 12–17 years of age.

Antibiotics are only effective in the first one or two weeks. As whooping cough is highly contagious, household members may also need antibiotics.

People who have queries or concerns about medicines should speak to their doctor or pharmacist. People can also call the [NPS Medicines Line](http://www.nps.org.au) on 1300 888 763 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm EST) and speak to a pharmacist for the cost of a local call.

A full copy of the article will be available at www.australianprescriber.com from April 1.

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