

# Important Queensland Health PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNIQUÉ

## Pertussis

18 November 2010

### Queensland Health is advising all immunisation providers that:

The pertussis epidemic is continuing in Queensland, with 2010 notifications at levels more than twice the average of the previous 5 years.

The epidemic is being experienced in most areas of the state.

Babies up to 6 months of age who are too young to be fully protected by vaccination are at highest risk for severe disease or death from pertussis infection.

Most babies who contract pertussis are infected by a parent or sibling.

The National Immunisation Program Schedule recommends that a DTPa containing vaccine should be given at 2 months, 4 months and 6 months. **The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has advised that the first dose of pertussis containing vaccine (Infanrix-hexa) can be given as early as six weeks of age to provide earlier protection against whooping cough.** Note that Prevenar and Rotateq are also licensed for use in infants from 6 weeks of age and should be given concurrently. The next scheduled vaccinations should be given at 4 and 6 months of age.

ATAGI has also advised that the booster dose of pertussis scheduled at 4 years of age (in combination with diphtheria, tetanus and polio) can be given from 3 years and 6 months. This should be given concurrently with the measles, mumps, rubella booster (MMR).

### How can you assist?

1. **Encourage parents to have their baby's scheduled 2 month vaccinations at 6 weeks of age.**
2. **Promote the funded parent pertussis vaccine for parents of infants up to 6 months.**
3. **Promote pertussis vaccination for anyone working with or caring for young children.**
4. **Encourage the administration of the scheduled 4 year old vaccinations from 3 years 6 months of age.**

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