

"Pertussis is a highly contagious acute respiratory disease caused by the bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*. This disease has 3 stages: catarrhal, paroxysmal, and convalescent. The symptoms of the catarrhal stage are mild and may go unnoticed. The paroxysmal stage of Pertussis is characterized by episodes of coughing with a distinctive ""whooping"" sound when breathing in (inspiration). This characteristic cough gives the disease its common name, Whooping Cough. During the convalescent stage, episodes of coughing are less frequent and symptoms improve. The incidence of Pertussis has diminished greatly with widespread use of the DPT vaccine (Diphtheria Pertussis Tetanus), but in certain areas of the United States outbreaks have occurred periodically in recent years. Pertussis is an infectious disease caused by the gram-negative coccobacillus, *Bordetella pertussis*. Pertussis is a highly contagious disease via droplets in the air from the respiratory tract of infected individuals. Transmission occurs during the catarrhal stage and during the first 2 to 3 weeks of the paroxysmal phase. The diagnosis of Pertussis may be confirmed by isolating the organism *Bordetella pertussis* from the sputum of an affected individual. These sputum samples are best obtained using a cotton swab that is placed through the nose into the rear portion of the throat (posterior pharynx). The paroxysmal phase of Pertussis is associated with very high levels of white cells in the blood (i.e., lymphocytosis)."