

# VACCINATION MATTERS

## Help Protect Families from Whooping Cough

### SURVEY RESULTS

#### ABOUT THE SURVEY

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) public health initiative **Vaccination Matters: Help Protect Families from Whooping Cough** is intended to educate the public about the seriousness of whooping cough (also called pertussis) and the importance of whooping cough vaccination for adolescents and adults.

#### SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians from July 8 to July 10, 2009 via the QuickQuery<sup>SM</sup> online omnibus service among 2,021 adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. A full survey methodology can be made available upon request.

#### SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **More than three-quarters** of adults (76%) didn't know or didn't think that whooping cough remains widespread in the United States
- **More than half** (56%) had low or no concern at all about contracting the disease, even though health experts estimate there are up to 600,000 whooping cough cases in adults each year in the United States
- **The majority** of adults (72%) were unsure or didn't know that protection from childhood whooping cough vaccinations can wear off over time, leaving them and other unprotected people susceptible to the disease. Babies who have not received all of their shots for whooping cough are especially vulnerable.
- **Many** adults (42%) reported receiving a Td vaccination in the past ten years to help protect them against two diseases - tetanus and diphtheria; but **more than half** (61%) were not even aware that there is a vaccine that helps protect them against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough – the Tdap vaccine
- When asked if the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that most adolescents and adults receive a vaccine for protection against whooping cough, **more than half** (57%) of adults were not sure
- **Most** adults (73%) believed they were up-to-date on their vaccinations; but the CDC estimates that only 2.1 percent of adults received a Tdap vaccine between 2005 and 2007

#### ADDITIONAL FACTS ON WHOOPING COUGH

- Whooping cough is a serious and highly contagious respiratory disease which usually starts like a cold and then turns into a persistent, hacking cough over time
- Protection against whooping cough wears off approximately five to 10 years after completion of childhood vaccination, leaving adolescents and adults susceptible to whooping cough
- People with whooping cough may not be aware they have it and can spread the infection to others, especially small children. Babies who have not received all of their shots for whooping cough are at risk of catching the illness
- Whooping cough symptoms can include coughing fits severe enough to cause vomiting and even break ribs. The illness may last for up to three months or more, and may lead to pneumonia, hospitalization and missed work or school days
- Vaccines are not just for babies and new parents. Health experts, including the CDC and the AAFP, recommend that most teens and adults get a single dose of the Tdap booster vaccine to replace Td (tetanus and diphtheria toxoids) for continued protection against whooping cough if they have not been previously vaccinated with Tdap or if their shots are not up to date



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