

Currently, pertussis is increasing in Canada as part of the expected cyclical peak of the disease (occurring every 2-5 years). Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a very contagious (easy to catch) disease of the respiratory tract. It is caused by a bacterium (germ) found in the mouth, nose and throat of a person who is infected. In Aug 2024, BC saw 72 cases of pertussis, 16 of which were on Vancouver Island and the majority of the 16 cases were unimmunized or under immunized. Cases of pertussis are expected to increase this fall/school year.

The best way to protect your child against pertussis is to get them immunized. In British Columbia, the pertussis vaccine is part of the routine childhood immunization program, and is given at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 18 months old, and again at age 4 to 6 years (before kindergarten). A pertussis vaccine is also given to teens at 14 to 16 years of age (Grade 9). Children who are currently in Grade 6 or 9 will be offered all immunizations they are due for through school-based immunization clinics. Information and consent forms will be distributed through the school this fall or early 2025.

The [ImmunizeBC Vaccination Status Indicator](https://immunizebc.ca/vaccination-status-indicator) (<https://immunizebc.ca/vaccination-status-indicator>) can also be used to find out if your child's immunization records are in the Provincial Immunization Registry. If your child was immunized at a public health unit, community health centre, school, or pharmacy, their record should already be in the registry. If your child was immunized at a First Nations community health centre, doctor's office, or outside BC, their record might not be in the registry yet.

- If the Vaccination Status Indicator shows that your child's vaccination status is **complete**, you do not need to do anything.
- If the Vaccination Status Indicator shows that your child's vaccination status is **incomplete**, please drop off a copy of your child's immunization record at your local public health unit, upload a copy to <https://www.immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca/> (records must be in English or French or a certified translation), or call your local public health unit for support.

If your child is not up to date for their routine immunizations or if you have questions about their immunization status, please contact your [local public health unit](https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations) (<https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations>) to schedule an appointment or speak to a Public Health Nurse.

For additional immunization information you can also refer to <https://immunizebc.ca/> or <https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/immunizations>