

Whooping Cough Is On The Rise

Mom and Actor Cheryl Hines:

Keep Yourself And Your Family Healthy

(NAPSA)—Whooping cough has been popping up in communities across the country and it's affecting people of all ages. If you haven't heard about this serious infection yet, chances are you will. But protection against whooping cough is readily available for you and your family.

That is why popular film and TV actor Cheryl Hines has teamed up with the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases' (NFID) Wipe Out the Whoop campaign. Together, they are encouraging all moms to make an appointment for themselves and their families to get the whooping cough booster vaccine.

"Work keeps me very busy, but family is my number one priority," says Hines. "It's important to take your baby to the doctor, but parents need to take care of themselves as well. Since whooping cough is such a problem, moms need to take the lead in getting family members vaccinated so the infection stays out of their homes and away from their babies." Hines is a series regular on HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm" and has appeared in numerous movies, most recently "RV" with Robin Williams.

Whooping cough, medically known as pertussis, can be tricky. At first it may appear like a common cold or bronchitis. But the infection can develop into uncontrollable coughing fits that may lead to difficulty breathing and sleeping and even fractured ribs. It takes months to recover and you could miss school or work. Even worse, whooping cough is very contagious, so other family members could get sick as well.

The childhood whooping cough vaccine eventually wears off, leav-

"Since whooping cough is such a problem, moms need to take the lead in getting family members vaccinated so the infection stays out of their homes and away from their babies."

—Cheryl Hines, actor and mom



ing adolescents and adults at risk for catching whooping cough and spreading it to others. That is why it is so important to get a booster vaccine to protect against whooping cough.

A mom infected with whooping cough can give the infection to her baby, who may be too young to be completely protected by childhood vaccines. Babies also tend to suffer from more serious complications, resulting in hospitalization and sometimes death.

"Whooping cough can be a serious infection, regardless of age," explains infectious disease specialist and NFID Medical Director Susan J. Rehm, M.D. "But babies are at greatest risk, so caregivers—moms, dads, grandparents—should make prevention a priority."

The whooping cough booster vaccine is called Tdap (tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis). It also protects against tetanus and diphtheria, two other infectious diseases for which boosting is needed over time. Tdap is a new vaccine, so call your doctor before your next appointment to make sure it is in stock.

Make an appointment with your doctor to get the whooping cough booster vaccine, or visit www.nfid.org/whoop for more information.