Pertussis: Management Guidelines for General Practice

Suspected pertussis?
- A new coughing illness lasting 2 or more weeks
  OR paroxysms of cough OR inspiratory whoop OR post-tussive vomiting.
- New coughing illness and contact in previous 3 weeks with a case of infectious laboratory confirmed pertussis.

Management of suspected pertussis
- Consider if admission to hospital is necessary.
- Consider commencing antibiotic treatment on clinical suspicion to reduce risk of transmission if within 14 days of onset of any cough. See current edition of Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic.
- Exclude from childcare, pre-school, school or work until case is no longer infectious: until EITHER 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment OR 21 days after onset of any new cough OR 14 days after onset of paroxysmal cough (if onset known).

Laboratory testing
- PCR on throat or nasopharyngeal swab/aspirate for cases with recent onset of cough (use Dacron swab, send dry, not in transport medium).
- Testing of cases with contacts <6 months of age is particularly important.

Positive test for pertussis?
- Complete Report of Notifiable Condition or Related Death form.
  - Use printed form or download from www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/NotifiableDiseaseReporting then fax to Communicable Disease Control Branch (CDCB) on (08) 8226 7187.
  - See ‘Management of suspected pertussis’ above for advice on treatment and exclusion periods.

Management of pertussis contacts
- URGENT phone call to CDCB 1300 232 272 for public health action if case had contact with high risk institutions while infectious (i.e. childcare, maternity hospital or neonatal unit).
- Provide antibiotic prophylaxis to ALL household members IF within 14 days of first exposure to infectious case AND contacts are children <6 months of age or expectant parents in the last month of pregnancy. See current edition of Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic.

Immunisation
  - Offer opportunistic pertussis vaccination, if indicated.
  - Promote timely primary vaccination for children and booster vaccination for adolescents and adults, including health care workers and pregnant women in the third trimester.