

# A B C D E F G H Children's Health

## New Vaccine Protects Adolescents Against Pertussis

(NAPSA)—Reported cases of pertussis (commonly known as whooping cough) have increased since the mid-70s. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there were almost 20,000 cases in 2004—the highest number of reported cases in more than 40 years.

In addition, almost 40 percent of the cases reported to the CDC in 2004 occurred in adolescents 10 to 19 years.

While this highly contagious bacterial infection starts out seeming like the common cold, symptoms usually progress to more severe coughing episodes.

Adolescents generally exhibit different symptoms of the disease, often without the classic “whoop,” making it difficult to diagnose. Because pertussis may not be diagnosed in adolescents, they may spread infection to other susceptible family members.

Fortunately, the United States (U.S.) Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved a booster vaccine, *Boostrix*<sup>®</sup>, for adolescents, aged 10 to 18 years of age. *Boostrix* adds a pertussis component to the routine tetanus/diphtheria booster currently administered to teens.

### Facts About Pertussis

- Pertussis, commonly known as “whooping cough,” is a highly contagious bacterial infection of the respiratory system that can cause spasms of severe coughing
- Coughing spells can last more than 100 days
- The high-pitched whoop associated with the disease is not common in adolescents, making it difficult to diagnose
- Pertussis is spread from airborne droplets
- Immunity from childhood vaccination wears off after five to 10 years
- Adding pertussis to the tetanus-diphtheria booster vaccine could help control community outbreaks



Before this there was no pertussis vaccine approved for use in the U.S. for children, ages seven and older.

Since immunity from childhood vaccination wears off after five to 10 years, many adolescents are susceptible to this highly contagious disease.

“The introduction of *Boostrix* marks a milestone in the fight

against pertussis in the United States, particularly among adolescents who are an important reservoir for the disease and often the source of infection for other family members,” said Gary Marshall, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, Louisville, Kentucky. “Adding pertussis to the current tetanus and diphtheria booster shot for teens is a logical strategy to prevent the disease in adolescents—without additional injections.”

### Important Information

*Boostrix* is indicated as a booster vaccination for the prevention of tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis as a single dose in individuals 10-18 years of age. *Boostrix* can be given if at least five years have elapsed since the last recommended series of childhood diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine.

In clinical studies, adverse events included injection-site pain, headache, and fatigue. As with other vaccines, rare adverse events may occur.

For further information, please call 888-825-5249.

*Boostrix*, brought to the U.S. by GlaxoSmithKline, is already approved in many other countries.