Clinical criteria for case classification
A. Acute cough illness of any duration.
B. Cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks.
C. One or more of the following signs and symptoms:
   - Paroxysms of coughing, or
   - Inspiratory “whoop”, or
   - Posttussive vomiting, or
   - For infants <1 year old only: apnea, with or without cyanosis.

Laboratory criteria for case classification
D. Isolation of Bordetella pertussis by culture from clinical specimen.
E. Positive polymerase chain reaction (PCR) for B. pertussis.

Epidemiological criteria for case classification
F. A person who is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed pertussis case.
G. A person who is epidemiologically linked to a PCR-confirmed probable infant pertussis case.

Case classification
Confirmed:
One of the following:
- A person with an acute cough illness of any duration (A) with isolation of B. pertussis by culture from a clinical specimen (D), or
- A person with a cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks (B) with one at least other symptom (C) and positive PCR for B. pertussis (E), or
- A person with a cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks (B) with one at least other symptom (C) who is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case (F).

Probable:
One of the following
- A person with a cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks (B) with at least one other symptom (C), or
- A person with a cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks (B) with at least one other symptom (C) who is epidemiologically linked to a PCR-confirmed probable infant case (G), or
- For infants <1 year old only: An infant with an acute cough illness of any duration (A) with at least one other symptom (C) and positive PCR for B. pertussis (E), or
- For infants <1 year old only: An infant with an acute cough illness of any duration (A) with at least one other symptom (C) who is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case (F), or
- For infants <1 year old only: An infant with an acute cough illness of any duration (A) with at least one other symptom (C) who is epidemiologically linked to a PCR-confirmed probable infant case (G).
Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports
Not applicable.

Comments
The clinical criteria above are appropriate for endemic or sporadic cases. In outbreak settings, a case may be defined as a cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks (as reported by a health professional). Because direct fluorescent antibody testing of nasopharyngeal secretions has been demonstrated in some studies to have low sensitivity and variable specificity,\(^1\)\(^2\) such testing should not be relied on as a criterion for laboratory confirmation. Serologic testing (IgM and IgG) for pertussis is available in some areas but is not standardized and, therefore, should not be relied on as a criterion for laboratory confirmation.


Return to Table of Contents