

## Pertussis

Pertussis is a highly contagious acute bacterial infection of the respiratory tract attributable to *Bordetella pertussis*. It is transmitted from person to person through contact with respiratory secretions (droplet transmission). The disease is most severe in infants and young children, many of whom suffer the intense paroxysmal coughing that usually terminates in an inspiratory “whoop.” Although the disease may be milder in older persons, those who are infected may transmit the disease to other susceptible persons, including unimmunized or incompletely immunized infants.

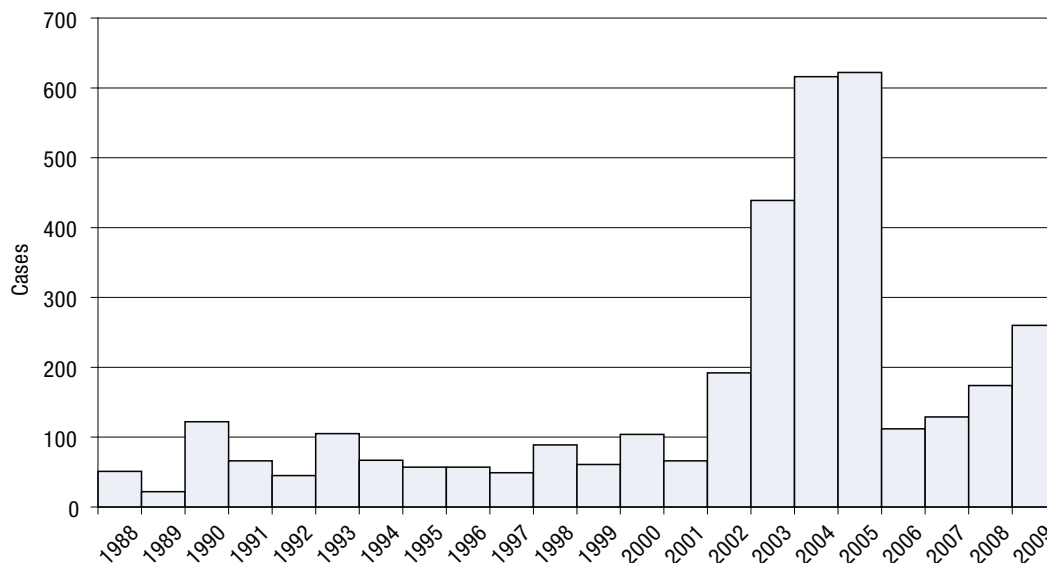
In 2009, the case definitions on pertussis were modified slightly to be more consistent with those recommended by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists. For cases that lack a positive culture, a cough of at least two weeks’ duration is now required to meet the definition of either a confirmed or presumptive case. (Patients with a positive culture must have a cough, though not necessarily of two weeks’ duration.)

Although down from a major incidence peak in 2004 and 2005, rates of pertussis have increased in Oregon since 2007 and have been above the national rate in 2008 and 2009. Pertussis rates have tended to peak every three to five years. Because pertussis often goes undiagnosed in adolescents and adults, it is likely that the actual number of cases greatly exceeds the number reported.

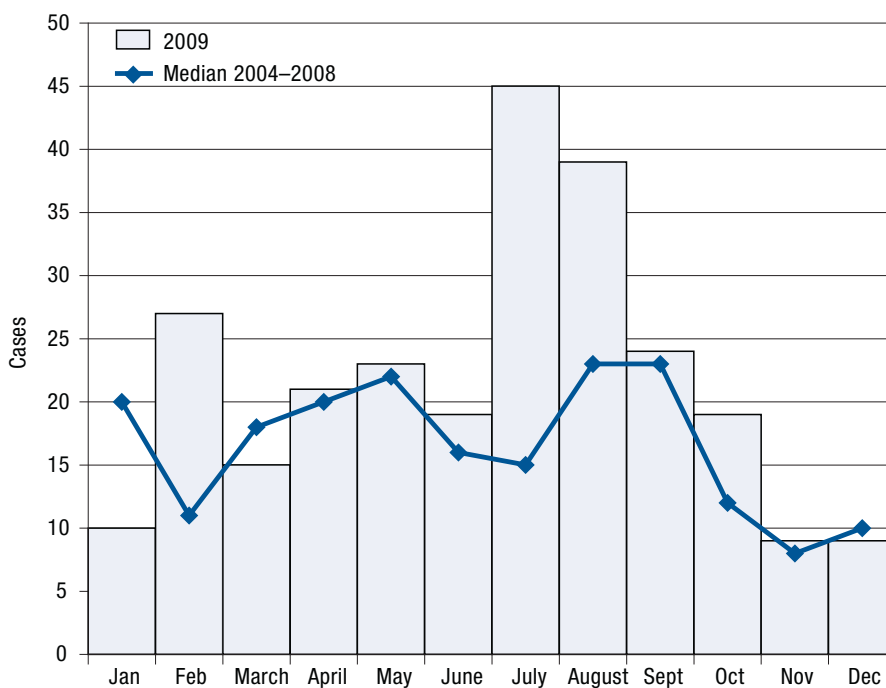
Infants have the highest risk of pertussis-related complications and death and have had the highest reported incidence rate in Oregon. Since 2000, 205 (46.5%) of the 441 infants diagnosed with pertussis in Oregon have been hospitalized, and four have died.

The greatest increase in incidence in recent years has been in adolescents and adults. Since 2000, more than 60% of the pertussis cases have been >10 years of age. Tdap vaccine should provide some immunity to the disease for all of us older kids. Health care workers in particular are encouraged to get a dose.

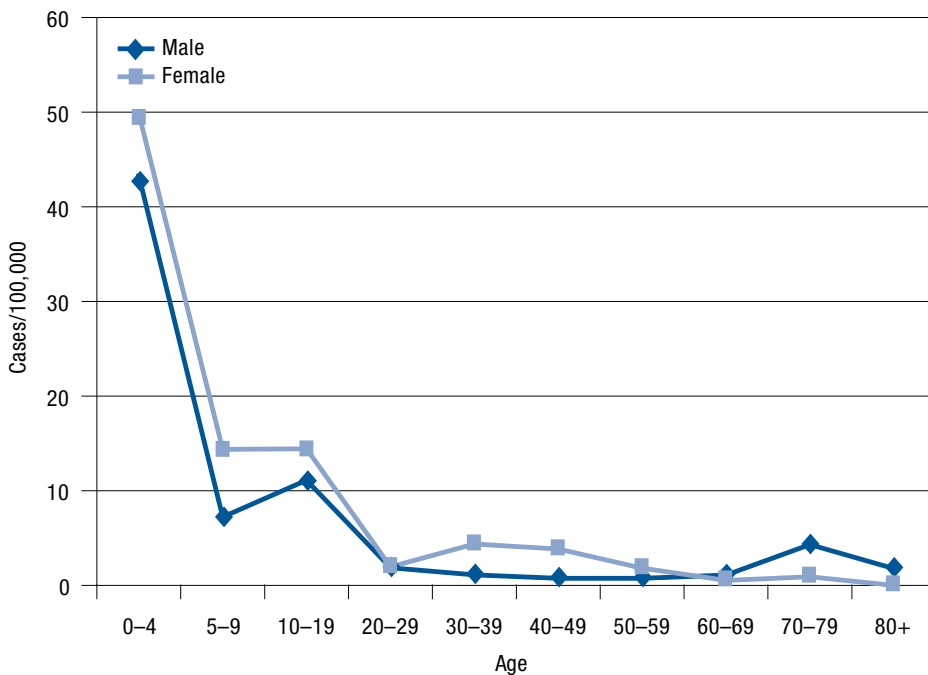
**Pertussis by year: Oregon, 1988–2009**



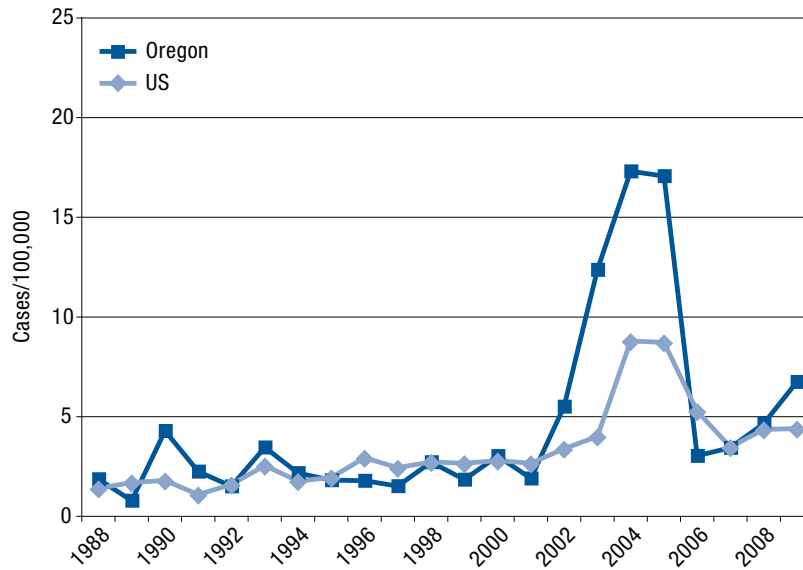
### Pertussis by onset month: Oregon, 2009



### Incidence of pertussis by age and sex: Oregon, 2009



### Incidence of pertussis: Oregon vs. nationwide, 1988–2009



### Incidence of pertussis by county of residence: Oregon, 2000–2009

