

September 9, 2024

Dear Parent or Guardian:

There have been several cases of pertussis (whooping cough) in the community the past few weeks. We are asking parents to monitor their children for the development of a cough illness.

Whooping cough is a bacterial disease that is easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Anyone can get whooping cough, but it can be very dangerous for babies and people with weak immune systems.

The disease begins with cold-like symptoms including a runny nose, possible fever, and a mild cough. After 1 to 2 weeks, the illness progresses to explosive coughing that can interrupt breathing, eating, and sleeping. Sometimes people cough so hard they vomit. The cough can be severe and last for weeks or months. People who have received the pertussis vaccine may have milder symptoms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Monitor your child for the development of a cough illness.** If your child has or develops the symptoms described above, the Health Department recommends:

- The child sees a health care provider as soon as possible. People with whooping cough are most infectious during the early stages of the disease. Seeing a health care provider as soon as possible is important to stop the disease from spreading.
- The child be tested for whooping cough and receive antibiotics the same day.
- The child be isolated at home until they have completed five days of antibiotics.
- People who live in the same household **and** people with weak immune systems who have been in close contact with the sick child also receive antibiotics.

**Make sure your family members are up to date with pertussis (whooping cough) vaccinations** (DTaP for babies and young children or Tdap for adolescents and adults). Pertussis vaccines are recommended and available for all ages.

If you have questions, please call the Health Department (715.839.4718) or your health care provider. Thank you for all you do to keep your child safe and healthy.



Elizabeth (Lieske) Giese, RN, MSPH  
Director- Health Officer