

Sept. 26, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child has been exposed to Pertussis (Whooping Cough). Whooping cough is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air when an infected person coughs

Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs ("coughing fits") followed by a whooping noise that lasts for at least 2 weeks. The whoop may not develop in very young infants, older children, teenagers and adults. Sometimes the severe coughing episodes can cause vomiting, turning blue, and/or difficulties catching one's breathe. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicine usually does not help relieve the cough.

Immunity to Pertussis decreases over time so most teenagers and adults have little immunity.

Please consider the following Jackson County Health Department recommendations:

1. Infants under one year of age, particularly those under six months old, are most likely to experience severe illness if they develop Pertussis. They often become ill after being exposed to infected children or adults. When possible, young infants should be kept away from people with a cough. **A doctor should promptly evaluate infants with any coughing illness.**
2. If you have children less than 7 years of age who have not been completely immunized against Pertussis (particularly infants under one year), we recommend you talk to your child's doctor about vaccination.

An adult vaccine is also available. It is highly recommended that pregnant women receive vaccine during their last trimester of pregnancy.

3. Protect your children by checking their records to be certain that all of their vaccinations are current.
4. We recommend that your child receive preventive antibiotics. Contact your child's physician and let him/her know that your child has been exposed to Pertussis.
5. **If your child comes down with cold symptoms that include a cough, talk to your child's doctor without delay.** Tell him/her that there has been Pertussis identified in your child's school. Giving antibiotics early can help your child get well faster and lower the chances of spreading the disease to others.

It is not necessary to give antibiotics to anyone if they have not had direct contact with a person diagnosed with Pertussis.

Please visit the following WEB site for information on Pertussis: www.whoopingcough.net.

If you have any questions please contact Rebecca at 404-9884, Karen at 404-9880 or Ellen at 404-9881.