



NORTHERN KENTUCKY
INDEPENDENT DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

www.nkyhealth.org

| August 2, 2012

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The Northern Kentucky Health Department is seeing an increased number of Pertussis (also known as Whooping Cough) cases being reported in the Northern Kentucky area. Pertussis is a contagious disease that can be spread in settings where people are in close contact. Since the beginning of January there have been 79 cases reported. The ages of those cases reported have ranged from three weeks to 67 years of age, with most cases being 13 years of age or younger.

The symptoms of Pertussis may begin gradually with a cough that won't go away and gets worse over time. The ill person may also have vomiting after bouts of coughing, a high pitched "whoop" when breathing in and lose their breath or not be able to take air into their lungs. Some people may not have the high pitched whoop, or the sudden attack of coughing, especially vaccinated children and adults.

People with laboratory confirmed cases of Pertussis must be excluded from child care, school, work or other public contact until they have received at least five days of antibiotic therapy. If no treatment was given, they must be excluded until three weeks after the onset of symptoms. Close contacts, anyone with repeated indoor face to face exposure, should also be treated. This would include those in childcare settings, and in some situations, work and school settings.

You may want to consider asking your health care provider about the Tdap vaccine. We are recommending this vaccine to the parents of small children. This vaccine can be obtained from the health department for \$4.00, if your health care provider is unable to provide it.

Please contact the Health Department at 859-363-2072 with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Joyce Rice, RN MSPH
Epidemiology Manager
Northern Kentucky Health Department



**NORTHERN KENTUCKY
INDEPENDENT DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

www.nkyhealth.org

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

<p>What is pertussis?</p>	<p>Pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, is a vaccine-preventable disease that lasts for many weeks and is typically found in children, but adults can also contract this illness.</p> <p>A higher than usual number of cases of pertussis, commonly referred to as "whooping cough," have been reported in Northern Kentucky recently. In 2011, the Health Department received reports of 49 confirmed cases of pertussis. So far in 2012, 77 cases have been reported to the Health Department. In a typical year, 25 cases are reported in Northern Kentucky.</p> <p>Pertussis is highly contagious with up to 80 percent of susceptible household contacts developing the disease after exposure.</p>
<p>What are the symptoms of the pertussis?</p>	<p>The early symptoms of pertussis include: runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever and a mild cough.</p> <p>After a week or two of these cold-like symptoms, however, a persistent cough develops which occurs in explosive bursts, sometimes ending with a high-pitched whoop and vomiting. Between fits, the child appears well.</p> <p>Coughing attacks continue to occur for six to 10 weeks and are more common at night. Pertussis can also lead to other complications, such as pneumonia and ear infections, particularly in infants. Pertussis is most severe in the first six months of life. Death from pertussis is rare.</p>
<p>How is pertussis spread?</p>	<p>Pertussis is spread by droplets expelled from an infected person's nose or mouth. Many infants who get pertussis are infected by older siblings, parents or other caregivers who might not even know they have the disease.</p>
<p>If I've been exposed to pertussis how long will it take for symptoms to develop?</p>	<p>Symptoms usually appear in seven to 21 days, but most frequently show up in seven to 10 days.</p>
<p>How long is a person with the pertussis contagious?</p>	<p>A person with pertussis is contagious from the time early cold-like symptoms develop through three weeks after the persistent and explosive bursts of coughing begin. Those treated with antibiotics are contagious until five days after effective treatment begins.</p>
<p>How can I keep from getting pertussis?</p>	<p>The best way to prevent pertussis in infants and young children is the DTP/DTaP vaccine. It is recommended that children receive five doses of the vaccine, with the first three doses given at one to two months intervals, starting at 8 weeks. The fourth dose should be at least six months after the third dose, commonly at 15-18 months of age. A fifth dose (booster) is given between 4 and 6 years of age. Vaccination should be completed by age 6.</p> <p>In addition, a vaccine for older children and adults is now available. Tdap vaccine</p>

	<p>is available in two brands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BOOSTRIX available for ages 10 through 18 years - ADACEL available for ages 11 through 64 years <p>Tdap vaccine is preferred over Td vaccine as a booster at age 11 to 12 years as adolescents are susceptible to pertussis due to waning immunity.</p> <p>Anyone who is interested in being vaccinated against pertussis should contact his/her primary medical provider. The vaccines are also available through the Health Department, with the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children age 18 and under can get the Tdap or DTap vaccine for free through the Vaccines For Children program, provided that they have a Medical card, KCHIP, no health insurance or health insurance that doesn't cover the vaccine. • Adults age 19 to 64 can get the Tdap booster at the Health Department's county health centers for a \$4 administrative fee. • To get the vaccine from the Health Department, please call the county health center most convenient for you to schedule an appointment.
<p>What should I do if I think I have pertussis?</p>	<p>See your medical provider for testing and treatment. Tell the provider if you or your child has been around others with cough/cold symptoms or that you've heard pertussis is in your community.</p> <p>Since pertussis remains contagious for three weeks after the coughing begins, it is advised that you do not go to work or school during that time, if antibiotics are not prescribed. If you are treated with antibiotics, you can return to school or work after completing five days of the prescribed antibiotics.</p>
<p>If I have pertussis, how can I prevent others from getting it?</p>	<p>Avoid coming into close contact with anyone until five days of antibiotic treatment for pertussis have been completed.</p>
<p>What treatments are available for pertussis? How serious is the disease?</p>	<p>Pertussis is usually treated with antibiotics. Pertussis is frequently complicated by pneumonia and ear infections, particularly in infants. Pertussis is most severe in the first six months of life and can result in breathing difficulties, gasping and seizures. Death from pertussis is rare but can occur in about 1 percent of infants younger than 2 months of age.</p>
<p>Where can I get more information on pertussis?</p>	<p>For more information online, you can visit the Centers for Disease Control at http://www.cdc.gov/nip/diseases/pertussis/.</p> <p>Or, for more information on DTaP or Tdap (the vaccines for pertussis) or any other concerns about pertussis, please call the Health Department's Epidemiology Services at 859.363.2070.</p>

Created: 7/26/06; Updated 7/26/12
Sources: Northern Kentucky Health Department Epidemiology; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Kentucky Department for Public Health