



Public Health
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

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Whooping Cough is on the Rise

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Encourages Pertussis Vaccination

Champaign, IL – Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory disease that is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), over 445 cases of pertussis have been reported in Illinois to date, with 65 percent of those reported since May 2010. Of the cases reported since May 2010, 45 percent have occurred among school-aged children; over 30 percent have occurred in children under five years-of-age.

Pertussis is a highly infectious illness that is easily transmitted through coughing and sneezing and may persist among a population for weeks to months. Symptoms of pertussis usually occur five to 10 days after exposure, but can take up to 21 days to appear. Initially symptoms are similar to a common cold: a runny nose, low-grade fever, and a mild occasional cough. However, the cough can become severe and spasmodic - with a distinctive “whooping” sound - and can progress to vomiting between bouts of coughing.

Patients with pertussis must be isolated from daycare, school, work, and public gatherings for at least five days after the start of appropriate antibiotic therapy to limit further transmission. Although most people recover completely from pertussis, complications from the disease can be severe in high-risk groups, especially infants under one year, and children who have not been fully immunized against the disease.

Most children are immunized against pertussis disease by receiving a series of vaccine doses of DTaP vaccine; however, immunity wanes as they reach adolescence. Since 2005, there has been an adolescent/adult pertussis booster vaccine (Tdap) that can be used for prevention and control of pertussis. Tdap vaccine is recommended to be routinely given at ages 11-12 years.

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In addition, IDPH recommends that all close contacts to a person with pertussis disease receive antibiotic treatment even if they have been vaccinated recently against pertussis. Close contacts include household members and persons who have had direct contact with respiratory, oral, and/or nasal secretions from a person with pertussis or have been within three feet of that person for at least 10 minutes.

The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) is offering free pertussis booster vaccine (Tdap) to those who meet certain federally-mandated guidelines. Adolescents 11 to 18 and participants 15 to 25 years-of-age enrolled in the Department of Human Service's WIC supplemental nutrition program are eligible to receive the vaccine at no charge. Those WIC participants who have infants in the home less than one year-of-age may also bring household contacts and family caregivers to CUPHD for this free vaccination as well. Many infants who get pertussis are infected by older siblings, parents, or caregivers who might not even know they have the disease. The vaccine is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. For those adults that do not meet the eligibility requirements, the pertussis vaccine is available for \$65.00 at the health district.

Appointments are available Monday through Friday and can be scheduled by calling (217) 531-4317.

For more information, visit CUPHD on the web at www.c-uphd.org.

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