



Public Health
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Region IV Public Health
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

Thank you

Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH
Deputy Health Officer

Clark County Public Health
Cowlitz County Health Department
Skamania County Health Department
Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services
(360) 397-8412

Please Distribute

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



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HEALTH ADVISORY

June 2, 2011

TO: Physicians and Other Health Care Providers

FROM: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH, Health Officer
Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH, Deputy Health Officer

RE: PERTUSSIS EXPOSURE

Cowlitz County Health Department is investigating several cases of pertussis in a school aged children. The specific schools involved include: Cascade Middle School, Mt. Solo Middle School and Mark Morris High School.

Please note the attached letter distributed to parents of the children in the Longview School District at the end of this document.

Please consider pertussis in your differential diagnosis in patients with symptoms consistent with pertussis infection and in particular if they attended the school described above. See the antimicrobial treatment and post exposure prophylaxis guidelines in table 1 below.

Early symptoms can last for 1 to 2 weeks and may include:

- Runny nose
- Low-grade fever (generally minimal throughout the course of the disease)
- Mild, occasional cough

As the disease progresses, the classic and more severe symptoms of pertussis can appear and include:

- Paroxysms (fits) of many, rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched "whoop"
- Vomiting

In addition, we are asking that you take every opportunity to urge patients, adults and children, to update their pertussis vaccinations.

Please call your local health jurisdiction to report suspected or confirmed pertussis. To report notifiable conditions or if you have questions, please call:

- Clark County Public Health: (360) 397-8182.
- Cowlitz County Health Department: (360) 414-5599
- Skamania County Community Health: (509) 427-3850
- Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services (360) 795-6207

Table 1: Recommended antimicrobial treatment and postexposure prophylaxis for pertussis, by age group

Age group	Primary agents			Alternate agent*
	Azithromycin	Erythromycin	Clarithromycin	TMP-SMZ
Under 1 month	Recommended agent. 10 mg/kg per day in a single dose for 5 days (only limited safety data available.)	Not preferred. Erythromycin is associated with infantile hypertrophic pyloric stenosis. Use if azithromycin is unavailable; 40–50 mg/kg per day in 4 divided doses for 14 days	Not recommended (safety data unavailable)	Contraindicated for infants aged < 2 months (risk for kernicterus)
1–5 months	10 mg/kg per day in a single dose for 5 days	40–50 mg/kg per day in 4 divided doses for 14 days	15 mg/kg per day in 2 divided doses for 7 days	Contraindicated at age < 2 months. For infants aged ≥ 2 months, TMP 8 mg/kg per day, SMZ 40 mg/kg per day in 2 divided doses for 14 days
Infants (6 months and older) and children	10 mg/kg in a single dose on day 1 (maximum: 500 mg/day) then 5 mg/kg per day on days 2–5 (maximum: 250 mg/day)	40–50 mg/kg per day (maximum: 2 g per day) in 4 divided doses for 14 days	15 mg/kg per day in 2 divided doses (maximum: 1 g per day) for 7 days	TMP 8 mg/kg per day, SMZ 40 mg/kg per day in 2 divided doses for 14 days (maximum: adult dose)
Adults	500 mg in a single dose on day 1 then 250 mg per day on days 2–5	2 g per day in 4 divided doses for 14 days	1 g per day in 2 divided doses for 7 days Pregnancy category C	TMP 320 mg per day, SMZ 1,600 mg per day in 2 divided doses for 14 days Pregnancy category C

* Trimethoprim sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMZ) can be used as an alternative agents to macrolides in patients aged ≥ 2 months who are allergic to macrolides, who cannot tolerate macrolides, or who are infected with a rare macrolide-resistant strain of *B. pertussis*.

Source: MMWR 2005;54:RR-14

June 2, 2011

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian,

We are writing to let you know that there have been three recent cases of pertussis (whooping cough) in the community including cases **at Cascade Middle School, Mount Solo Middle School and Mark Morris High School**. Your child may have been exposed to one of the ill individuals.

Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by coughing. Pertussis usually begins with cold-like symptoms and a cough that worsens over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms may include coughing “fits” followed by a “whooping” noise, vomiting, cyanosis (turning blue) or the inability to catch one’s breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help eliminate the cough. Usually, persons infected with pertussis do not have a fever. In older children and adults the symptoms may be only a persistent cough which is worse at night. This illness is often very severe in small infants. **Please see the recommendations below for children and staff who attend the schools listed above.**

Although adults and children may catch pertussis, even if they have had all or some of their immunizations (DTaP), **vaccination against pertussis is still one of the best ways of reducing the risk of getting this disease**. Cowlitz County Health Department encourages parents to take this opportunity to ensure their families are up-to-date with vaccinations that protect against pertussis and other diseases.

Persons who are exposed to pertussis can lower the risk of becoming ill by taking antibiotics prescribed by their health care provider. Persons who are already ill, after being exposed to someone with pertussis, can take antibiotics to recover more quickly and to reduce the risk of spreading pertussis to others.

Cowlitz County Health Department Recommendations:

Children and staff in the Cascade Middle School may have been exposed to pertussis.

1. If you or your child have had a cold or coughing illness for two weeks or longer and the symptoms are still present it is important for you to be evaluated ***promptly*** by your doctor for pertussis infection.
2. Please make sure that you are current on all of your pertussis vaccinations whether or not you were exposed to the ill person. Pertussis vaccines are recommended for both children and adults. Adults and adolescents should have a Tdap booster shot to protect them against pertussis.
3. If you see your doctor for any of the reasons listed above please show this letter to your doctor at your visit

If you have questions about pertussis or recommended childhood vaccinations, please call your health care provider. Thank you for your attention.

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