



Potential Exposure to Pertussis

December 4th , 2018

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian,

We want you to be aware that we have an additional student with a confirmed case of pertussis (whooping cough). Your child may have been exposed through contact with these students in a classroom or athletic setting or on the bus.

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.**

We recommend the following for children and staff that may have been exposed to pertussis:

- Please monitor your child for the next 3 weeks for cold-like symptoms.** Symptoms of pertussis usually appear within 7-10 days of exposure, but can be as long as 3 weeks before symptoms begin. If your child develops cough, fever or other signs of respiratory illness s/he should be evaluated **promptly** by your doctor for pertussis infection.
- If you have a child under the age of 1 year who was potentially exposed, please speak with your doctor about getting antibiotics for your child even if your child does not have any symptoms. This is done to prevent an exposed infant from developing the illness. These antibiotics must be taken as soon as possible after exposure.
- If you are pregnant, especially if in your third trimester, and were potentially exposed, please speak with your doctor about getting antibiotics for yourself to prevent the development of illness even if you do not have any of the above symptoms. These antibiotics must be taken as soon as possible after exposure.
- If you see your doctor for any of the reasons listed above, please show them this letter at your visit.
- Although adults and children may contract pertussis, even if they have had all or some of their immunizations (DTaP and Tdap), **vaccination against pertussis is still one of the best ways of reducing the risk of getting this disease and reducing the severity of disease.** Pertussis vaccines are recommended for both children and adults. Adults and adolescents should have a Tdap booster shot. 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 preventable diseases, regardless of a potential exposure.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our nurse, Breann Syron, at 360-577-2772.

Sincerely,

Brooks Cooper
Principal

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Together we aspire and achieve.

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