

Pertussis Update

To: School Nurses and Supervisory Unions (Principals and Superintendents)
From: Susan Schoenfeld, Deputy State Epidemiologist for Infectious Disease

Pertussis cases continue to be reported in Vermont

Action Steps for Schools:

- **Be aware** of the number of pertussis cases in Vermont.
- **Consider pertussis** in students and staff who exhibit symptoms.
- **Report suspected cases** to the Vermont Department of Health.
- **Vaccinate** students and staff. This is the best protection against pertussis.

Be Aware

To date this calendar year, there have been 227 confirmed pertussis cases in Vermont, with 56 of those cases confirmed between July 15 and August 26. By comparison, between July 15 and August 26, 2011 there were eight confirmed pertussis cases.

- Cases since July 15 have been confirmed in 11 Vermont counties (Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Chittenden, Franklin, Lamoille, Orleans, Orange, Rutland, Washington, and Windham).
- Cases ranged in age from less than 1 month to 62 years of age, with 25 cases occurring in children ages 5 to 18 years old.

Consider pertussis

Clinical symptoms of pertussis can include:

1. A paroxysmal cough of any duration, especially if followed by whooping, vomiting, or gagging
2. A cough in a person who has been notified of a close exposure to pertussis
3. Coughing illness that lasts more than two weeks

Actions to be taken with students and staff:

Student/ Staff Status	Recommendation
Diagnosed with pertussis?	Stay at home, avoid close contact with others until they have completed the fifth day of an appropriate antibiotic - OR - had cough symptoms for at least three weeks
Exhibiting symptoms of pertussis? – OR – Coughing for at least seven days and pertussis cases have been identified in school?	Refer for evaluation by a health care provider. Stay at home, avoid close contact with others until they have completed the fifth day of an appropriate antibiotic - OR - had cough symptoms for at least three weeks

Report suspected cases

Suspected cases should be reported to your District Health Office or to the Health Department's Epidemiology Unit 24/7 at 802-863-7240.

- Inform families and staff when a case of pertussis is diagnosed in your school. The Health Department has sample letters you can use.
- The public health nurse at your District Health Office can help to identify close personal contacts and refer them to discuss antibiotic prophylaxis with their health care provider.

Vaccinate

- One dose of Tdap vaccine is required for seventh grade enrollment and is recommended for ALL adults.
- There is no minimal time interval between doses of Td and Tdap
- Specific indications for Tdap include:
 - ✓ children age 7 to 10 who have not completed the five dose DTaP series
 - ✓ pregnant women during the third or late second trimester (after 20 weeks)
 - ✓ adults over 64 years who anticipate contact with infants
 - ✓ health care providers

More information about pertussis is available at the Health Department's website (below). Included on the website is the Vermont Department of Health algorithm for the clinical evaluation and management of pertussis, sent to clinicians in August.

<http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/pertussis/Pertussis.aspx>