Rx: Caring for your family when someone has Whooping Cough

Name: _____

Date: _____

Your child may have pertussis (whooping cough). Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory illness spread by coughing or sneezing. Patients with pertussis may have a severe cough or coughing fits, sometimes followed by whooping, vomiting or gagging that can last for weeks. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be very dangerous for infants and people with weakened immune systems.

Recommendations:

If an antibiotic has been prescribed for your child today, be sure that your child takes all of the medicine as directed.

Family members and close household contacts should also be treated. Infants, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems who develop symptoms should see their health care provider as soon as possible.

Keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports, dances, family events and playgroups until after the five day course of antibiotic treatment has been completed.

We are required by law to report this information to the Vermont Department of Health in order to be sure that appropriate public health follow-up occurs. You may be contacted by Health Department staff and asked to provide further information to assist with this follow up.

Vaccination is the best protection against pertussis. Immunity from childhood pertussis vaccination can **decrease** over time, so please make sure your child and other family members are up to date on their immunizations, as follows –

For children: **DTaP** (diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis) **vaccine** according to the recommended childhood schedule.

One dose of **Tdap** (tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis) **vaccine** is recommended for people 11 years and older.

Tdap vaccine/boosters are especially important for:

- 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

Please call our office if you have any questions or concerns _____