



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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

**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

February 3, 2012

TO: Physicians and Other Health Care Providers

FROM: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH, Health Officer

RE: PERTUSSIS EXPOSURE

Cowlitz County Health Department is investigating cases (at least two, probably four) of pertussis in school aged children. The specific schools involved include: **Wallace Elementary School, and Coweeman Middle School of Kelso School District.**

Please note the attached letter distributed to parents of the children in the Kelso 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 Region IV:

- 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

DATE: February 3, 2012

RE: Pertussis or Whooping Cough Exposure

We are writing to let you know that your child may have been exposed to a case of pertussis.

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.

Although 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.** 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 infants.

Cowlitz County Health Department Recommendations:

If your child was exposed AND there is a pregnant woman (in her 3rd trimester of pregnancy) or infant under 1 year of age in your household we recommend that you contact your health care provider for preventive treatment against pertussis.

Children in attendance the week of January 30, 2012 may have been exposed to Pertussis.

1. If your child was exposed as described above and has had a cough for the last 2 weeks or develops a cold or coughing illness in the next 2 to 3 weeks, please have your child evaluated ***promptly*** by their health care provider for Pertussis infection.
2. Please make sure that you and your child(ren) are current on all of your Pertussis vaccinations whether or not you or your child were exposed to the ill person. Children and adults who are not up-to-date with their Pertussis immunizations should visit their health care providers to receive the necessary shots. Pertussis vaccines are recommended for both children and adults. Exposed children who received their third dose of DTaP 6 months or more before exposure to Pertussis should be given a 4th dose at this time. Children who have had 4 doses of Pertussis vaccine should receive a booster DTaP unless a dose has been given within the last 3 years or they are 7 year of age or older. Adolescents over age 11 who have not received TdaP should get it at this time. Those over age 11 who received a Td booster should receive TdaP if a 5-year interval has elapsed.
3. If you are a woman in the third trimester of pregnancy and were exposed as described above please speak with your health care provider about getting antibiotics for yourself even if you don’t have symptoms; this will prevent exposing your newborn infant to the illness.

4. If you see your health care provider for any of the reasons listed above please show this letter to him/her at your visit.

If you have questions please call, your health care provider or the Cowlitz County Health Department at (360) 414-5599 and thank you for your attention.

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