



MEMO

TO: Waukesha County School Principals, School Nurses, and Personnel

FROM: Antwayne M. Robertson, Director of Health and Human Services

DATE: October 10, 2014

RE: **Changes in Pertussis Follow-Up for the 2014-15 School Year**

During the 2011-12 school year, Waukesha County experienced a pertussis outbreak with 430 cases. The number of cases have decreased the past two school years because of the joint efforts of school personnel, physicians, parents and public health. However, pertussis continues to circulate in the community and appropriate management of cases is essential.

In order to manage the incidence of pertussis effectively with limited resources for the 2014-15 school year, the Waukesha County Public Health Division (WCPHD) needs to prioritize pertussis case and contact investigations. This memo summarizes the WCPHD pertussis prioritization plan for 2014-15, and makes recommendations regarding the role of schools in managing pertussis.

Pertussis Transmission

Pertussis is usually spread by *repeated indoor face-to-face contact* with someone who is sick with the disease. Examples of persons who are likely to catch pertussis are people in the same household, close friends and people who share a combined space for a prolonged period of time (e.g., in a regular carpool). These persons are considered close contacts and are at higher risk of becoming ill.

Some people are at greater risk for *serious illness* from pertussis and are recommended to take preventative antibiotics if they are exposed. People at greater risk of *serious illness* are:

- Infants under one year of age; infants are more likely to become seriously ill, need hospitalization and are more likely to die from pertussis.
- Pregnant women who are in their 3rd trimester (newborn infant is at high risk of serious illness)
- Persons who are immunocompromised, have chronic lung disease (including asthma), or have neuromuscular diseases that make it difficult to swallow

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WCPHD Pertussis Prioritization Plan will include:

- Case Management of laboratory confirmed cases only
- School Personnel will be notified about confirmed cases by WCPHD
- Contact investigation and control measures focusing on
 - Household contacts
 - Close contacts with an emphasis on those who are at high risk for serious disease (see above)
 - Clusters of cases within a classroom or group (3 or more cases within a group, whose onset of illness occurs within a 21 day period)
 - Contacts to a pertussis case in special settings e.g. day care centers, special needs classrooms
- A School Pertussis notification template regarding possible exposure will be provided to schools and other groups to distribute

Pertussis Follow-up for Schools will include:

- Report pertussis cases to WCPHD or the local health department where student or staff resides
- Assist with the identification and notification of close contacts and high risk contacts as requested by WCPHD
- Schools may choose to notify classroom contacts and other school groups of possible exposures. Do not send the notice until the diagnosis verified by WCPHD. Use the School Pertussis template notification and the State of Wisconsin Disease Fact Sheet on Pertussis. The template is available at www.waukeshacounty.gov/schools
- Refer for medical evaluation students and staff who have pertussis-like symptoms as described below.
 - A cough that is lasting more than a week
 - A long series of coughing that makes it difficult to catch one's breath (coughing fits)
 - Coughing fits that are followed by a whooping noise or vomiting
- Students and staff with confirmed pertussis should be restricted from school until they have completed 5 days of antibiotics
- Students and staff suspected of having pertussis should be restricted from school until they have either a negative test or have completed 5 days of antibiotics
- Encourage one Tdap vaccine for adolescents age 11-12 and for adults

The follow-up plan described above may be modified depending on the situation. The WCPHD will expand the investigation and control measures as necessary depending on the circumstances.

The WCPHD is committed to working with Schools, parents, and the community to control the spread of pertussis. School personnel are encouraged to call the WCPHD at 262-896-8430 if there are questions or to discuss individual situations.