



JEFFERSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1541 Annex Road ♦ Jefferson, WI 53549 ♦ 920-674-7275 (Phone) ♦ 920-674-7477 (FAX)

www.jeffersoncountywi.gov

Press Release

September 16, 2016

From Jefferson County Health Department

For questions contact Gail Scott or Diane Nelson at 920-674-7275

Pertussis Cases in Jefferson County

The Jefferson County Health Department is following up on cases of pertussis or whooping cough. From May 1, 2016 to September 15, 2016 the Health Department followed up on a total of 15 confirmed cases and 7 suspect cases. For each case there may be many other people exposed.

"At most, we had 37 contacts who were followed after contact with 1 confirmed case. Another case had 14 contacts. Usually there are at least 3-5 contacts who need notification and possible treatment or isolation; it is never just the 1 confirmed patient who is affected by this illness," stated Gail Scott, Director.

Jefferson County Health Department is suggesting that residents assure they are protected against pertussis.

"The best defense against pertussis continues to be vaccination," said Scott. "We recommend that all residents check their vaccination status and schedule a visit to their healthcare provider or visit their local health department if they have not yet been immunized against pertussis."

Pertussis is a contagious bacterial disease affecting the respiratory tract and is spread by coughing, often through repeated face-to-face contact.

The pertussis vaccine is given in combination with Diphtheria and Tetanus vaccines, called DTaP, and is recommended for children age two months through six years old. A pertussis vaccine for adolescents and adults, called Tdap, is recommended as a one-time booster. If someone does experience pertussis after immunization, their case is usually milder.

Families with a newborn are encouraged to be immunized as part of a process called "cocooning", where parents, siblings, grandparents and others are vaccinated to provide additional protection to the newborn, who cannot be vaccinated until they are two months old. Even at that age infants still lack adequate protection. Newborns with pertussis can experience severe complications, even death.

Pertussis can begin like a cold in infants and young children, with a low grade fever and a mild, irritating cough that can appear within 7 to 20 days after exposure. The illness progresses to include explosive coughing that can interrupt breathing, eating and sleeping, and may be followed by vomiting and exhaustion.

Individuals with symptoms should contact their healthcare provider about antibiotic treatment that can shorten the time when they are contagious. Those with pertussis should be isolated from school, work or other activities until completing at least the first 5 days of the recommended antibiotic therapy.

Some interesting facts about Pertussis:

- Pertussis is also known as "whooping cough" because of the "whooping" sound that is made when gasping for air after a fit of coughing.
- Coughing fits due to pertussis infection can last for up to 10 weeks or more; this disease is sometimes known as the "100 day cough."
- Pertussis can cause serious illness in babies, children, teens, and adults and can even be life-threatening, especially in babies.
- Approximately half of babies less than 1 year old who get pertussis need treatment in the hospital.
- The most effective way to prevent pertussis is through vaccination with DTaP for babies and children and with Tdap for preteens, teens, and adults.
- Vaccination of pregnant women with Tdap is especially important to help protect babies.
- Vaccinated children and adults can become infected with and spread pertussis; however, disease is typically much less serious in vaccinated people.
- Pertussis is generally treated with antibiotics, which are used to control the symptoms and to prevent infected people from spreading the disease.
- Worldwide, there are an estimated 16 million cases of pertussis and about 195,000 deaths per year.
- In 2012, the most recent peak year, 48,277 cases of pertussis were reported in the United States, but many more go undiagnosed and unreported. This is the largest number of cases reported in the United States since 1955 when 62,786 cases were reported.
- Since 1980, there has been an increase in the number of reported cases of pertussis in the United States. In 2010, an increase in reported cases among 7 through 10 year olds was seen. Similar trends occurred in the following years; however, an increase in cases was also observed among teens.

"Individuals with questions are welcome to contact the Jefferson County Health Department at 920-674-7275," stated Gail Scott, Director/Health Officer. "Individuals can check with the Health Department to see if they are eligible for the pertussis containing vaccine at no charge. Those with health insurance can check with their medical provider to obtain the vaccine."

For more information about pertussis and vaccination recommendations:

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/pertussis.htm>.

To check your children's immunization history:

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/publicaccess.htm>.

--END--