

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



STEVE LEVY
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

JAMES L. TOMARKEN, MD
MSW, MPH, MBA, FRCPC, FACP
Commissioner

Dear Parent,

December 1, 2011

There has been an increase in the number of diagnosed cases of Pertussis in Suffolk County. Pertussis, also known as “whooping cough” is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by cough. Children and adults may still develop Pertussis even if they are up to date with their vaccinations as immunity to Pertussis wanes over the years. Pertussis is particularly dangerous, even fatal, to infants who are not fully immunized.

There are 3 stages of pertussis infection:

Stage 1: Mild upper respiratory symptoms, low-grade fever, slight cough (mimics a cold, lasts 1-2 weeks, very infectious stage)

Stage 2: Spasmodic coughing episodes sometimes followed by long whooping sound (6 or more weeks), may also have vomiting after coughing episodes (continues to be infectious)

Stage 3: Although the infection is not contagious after appropriate antibiotic treatment, coughing episodes may persist for weeks to months, “cough of 100 days.”

Once a susceptible person is exposed to Pertussis, it may take up to three weeks for symptoms to develop. The incubation period is usually 7-10 days with a range of 5-21 days. Immunocompromised children may take longer to develop symptoms. If you observe these symptoms in your child, contact your pediatrician and request that your child be tested for pertussis with a special nasal-throat swab. This test can be performed at either the doctor’s office or hospital emergency room.

Early treatment with the appropriate antibiotic for the symptomatic student, his asymptomatic family and close contacts (not currently showing symptoms), will eliminate disease transmission and may reduce disease severity. The most effective deterrent to Pertussis remains vaccination. A Pertussis containing vaccine (Tdap) is available from your physician for those ages 10 years through adult and for ages 7-10 that are incompletely immunized. If your child’s health care provider suspect’s a diagnosis of Pertussis, orders testing and prescribes an antibiotic, your child should remain home until they have completed five days of their antibiotic treatment.

For additional information on Pertussis, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov. Parents or their physician may contact the Division of Disease Control at 631-853-3055 if they have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dennis Russo, MD



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
225 Rabro Drive, Hauppauge, NY 11788 (631) 853-3055 FAX: (631) 853-3073