

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



STEVE LEVY
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

DAVID G. GRAHAM, M.D., M.P.H.
Acting Commissioner

Sachem School District

October 12, 2006

Dear Parent,

We have seen an increased number of cases of Pertussis in adolescents in the last few years. Pertussis, also known as "Whooping Cough" is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by cough. Pertussis begins with cold symptoms and a cough that worsens over 1-2 weeks. The most common symptoms of this illness include a long series of coughs sometimes called "coughing fits," sometimes followed by vomiting, frequently worsening at night. 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.

If your child shows any signs of this illness, he/she should be evaluated by a physician who can perform a specific throat swab to test for the disease and determine if antibiotics are necessary. If your child is already sick, giving antibiotics early can help your child get well faster and lower the chances of spreading the disease to others. Family members and close contacts should also receive antibiotics if the child is diagnosed with pertussis.

A new combination Tetanus/Pertussis vaccine, for children over the age of ten, is available which can provide protection against future exposures. You can discuss administration of this vaccine with your physician. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Dillon, MD, MPH".

Patricia Dillon, MD, MPH
Director, Bureau of Disease Control

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
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