

NEWBURGH ENLARGED CITY SCHOOLDISTRICT

Ralph A. Pizzo - Superintendent of Schools


www.newburghschools.org

David E. Noriega, Ed.D. Assistant Superintendent / Student Intervention and Support Services
Ed Forgit Assistant Superintendent / Curriculum & Instruction
Mary Ellen Leimer Assistant Superintendent / Human Resources
Michael Pacella Assistant Superintendent / Finance

124 Grand Street
Newburgh, NY 12550
P: (845) 563-3500
F: (845) 563-3501

MEMORANDUM

TO: Building Principals
Senior Staff
Mrs. Pamela Peterson

FROM: Ralph A. Pizzo 
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: November 14, 2011

SUBJECT: Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Attached are copies of the following items from Jean M. Hudson, Commissioner of Health, regarding pertussis/whooping cough:

1. Letter dated November 14, 2011
2. Pertussis - Defined/Fact Sheet
3. Pertussis - Fact Sheet

Please have the items copied for dissemination to the parents of all students, and the entire staff in your respective buildings through your normal channels of communication. Administrators located in buildings other than schools, please follow through in distributing this information to all staff under your supervision as well.

Thank you.

RAP/bp

C: File



Edward A Diana
County Executive

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Jean M. Hudson, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner of Health

124 Main Street
Goshen, New York 10924

Commissioner/Administration (845) 291-2332
Nursing (845) 291-2330
Environmental Health (845) 291-2331
Early Intervention (845) 291-2333
Fax: (845) 291-2341

November 14, 2011

Dear Parents:

Three students have been treated for probable pertussis (whooping cough) in the Newburgh school district. The students attend Meadow Hill School, Fostertown School and Newburgh Free Academy. Antibiotics given early in the infection may reduce symptoms and does shorten the period of communicability.

Pertussis begins as a mild respiratory infection. Symptoms resemble those of a common cold with sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever and mild cough. Within two weeks the cough becomes more severe and is characterized by episodes of numerous rapid coughs followed by a crowing or high-pitched whoop. A thick, clear mucous may be discharged. **If your child has any of these symptoms please consider a physician's evaluation. Emphasis on hand washing and disposable tissues may also help prevent contagion.**

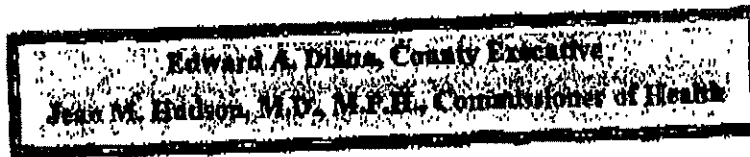
While pertussis can occur at any age, the risk of symptomatic infection in appropriately immunized persons is low.

The main danger of pertussis is to infants up to one year. Do not allow anyone with an active cough near very young children, particularly babies. Anyone with a persistent cough (all ages) should be evaluated for pertussis.

If you have any questions, you may call the Health Department at 291-2330.

Sincerely,

Jean M. Hudson, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner



**County of Orange
Department of Health**

PERTUSSIS

What is Pertussis?

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a highly contagious disease involving the respiratory tract. It is caused by a bacterium that is found in the mouth, nose and throat of an infected person.

Who gets Pertussis?

Pertussis can occur at any age. Pertussis is increasing in teenagers and adults.

How is Pertussis spread?

Pertussis is primarily spread by direct contact with discharges from the nose and throat of persons with whooping cough.

What are the symptoms of Pertussis?

Pertussis starts like a common cold, including sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever and a mild cough. Within two weeks, the cough becomes more severe. Rapid coughs can be followed by a crowing or high-pitched whoop. The cough is more frequent at night.

When and for how long is a person able to spread Pertussis?

A person can spread Pertussis from the time of the first cough to three weeks after the cough has started.

What is the vaccine for Pertussis?

The vaccine for Pertussis is usually given in combination with diphtheria and tetanus. Immunization authorities recommend DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis) vaccine be given at 2,4,6 and 15-18 months of age and between 4 and 6 years of age. Tdap is now recommended for 11-18 year olds as a one time booster dose.

Can Pertussis be treated?

Yes.

1. If you have a harsh rapid cough see your doctor or clinic.
2. Treatment with antibiotics for 5 days can prevent spreading the infection to others.

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Fact Sheet

What Everyone Should Know About Pertussis

- Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial infection that causes uncontrollable and violent coughing. This coughing lasts for several weeks or even months.
- Pertussis begins with cold-like symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever and mild cough. Within two weeks, this cough becomes more severe and is characterized by frequent, rapid coughs followed by a high pitched whoop. A thick, clear mucous may be discharged from the nose.
- Pertussis can occur at any age. People at high risk for severe illness include children who are too young to be vaccinated and those who have not completed their vaccination series.
- Major complications of pertussis may include pneumonia, middle ear infection, loss of appetite, sleep disturbance, dehydration, seizures and death.
- Pertussis is primarily spread from person to person by direct contact with mucus or droplets from the nose and throat of infected individuals.
- If untreated, a person with pertussis is contagious (able to infect others) from the first day of symptoms until three weeks after the start of severe cough.
- Treatment of pertussis with appropriate antibiotics will shorten the contagious period to five days after the start of treatment.

Preventing Pertussis

- The single most effective way to prevent pertussis is to maintain high immunization levels within the community.
- Adults in close contact with an infant under the age of 12 months should receive a dose of Tdap in order to provide protection to these babies who are unable to be vaccinated.
- Adults between the ages of 19 and 64 who have not previously received a dose of Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis), should replace their next tetanus booster with a single dose of Tdap.



Edward A Diana
County Executive

Department of Health
Jean M. Hudson, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health
124 Main Street
Goshen, New York 10924

Voice: 845-291-2332

Fax: (845) 291-2341