

## HEALTH ALERT NETWORK HEALTH DISTRICT 4

### PERTUSSIS ALERT FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Central District Health Department Urges Medical Providers to Swab Suspected Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Cases in Infants, Teenagers, and Adults

October 1, 2010

Central District Health Department (CDHD) has observed an estimated 60% increase in pertussis cases over the last three months, compared to a recent five-year average. The latest cases are occurring in a variety of patients, including adults, teenagers, children, and infants.

Please note: Teenagers and adults are significant sources of transmission to unvaccinated infants. When pertussis occurs in infants, household members are the source of the infection about 80% of the time. Diagnosing the disease early in an adult may help save an infant's life. Think pertussis, or it may be missed.

#### **Laboratory Testing**

Please swab and test whenever possible. Recommended laboratory tests include polymerase chain reaction (PCR) of a nasal aspirate (preferred specimen) or nasopharyngeal swab. Testing recommendations can be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/surv-manual/chpt10-pertussis.htm#7>

#### **Prevention in the Household and Community**

To stop the spread of disease, antibiotic prophylaxis is recommended for the case and all household contacts. The antibiotics for the treatment of cases and chemoprophylaxis of household contacts are the same. Azithromycin, clarithromycin, and erythromycin are all effective treatment choices.

Immunization continues to be an important part of the control for pertussis. Childhood and adolescent immunization recommendations can be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/child-schedule.htm#printable>

For additional information contact the Immunizations Program at CDHD at 327-7450 or the Office of Communicable Disease Control & Public Health Preparedness at 327-8625.

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