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*"To improve the health of our communities by identifying and assuring sustainable solutions to community health issues."*

## HEALTH ALERT NETWORK HEALTH DISTRICT 4

### PERTUSSIS ADVISORY FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Central District Health Department Urges Medical Providers to Watch  
for Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Cases

April 20, 2012

Due to a recent increase in local pertussis cases and Washington's pertussis epidemic, Central District Health Department (CDHD) urges all health care providers to **think pertussis if patients present with a cough illness**. Washington documented 770 pertussis cases through March 31<sup>st</sup>, compared to 94 during the same time last year. Please take every opportunity to vaccinate patients.

#### Diagnosis

The signs for pertussis can be deceptively mild in the first stage with a mild cough, sneezing, and runny nose. Classic pertussis is characterized by a persistent cough of two or more weeks duration, which is often accompanied by paroxysmal coughing fits, inspiratory "whoop", and post-tussive vomiting.

Young infants: Pertussis is often missed because the initial signs are a runny nose with a mild or undetectable cough. There is no fever. Apnea, hypoxia, or seizures may occur.

Adolescents and adults: Most cases go undiagnosed. Bronchitis and asthma are common misdiagnoses. Teenagers and adults are a significant source of transmission to infants. Diagnosing the disease early in these groups may help save an infant's life.

#### Laboratory Testing

Recommended laboratory tests include polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or culture on a nasopharyngeal swab. Please swab and test whenever possible. Testing recommendations can be found at:

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

## Prevention

Immunization continues to be an important part of the control for whooping cough for adults and children. Immunization recommendations can be found at:

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

To stop the spread of disease, antibiotic prophylaxis is recommended for the case and all household contacts. Azithromycin is a common choice for the treatment of cases and prophylaxis of household contacts.

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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