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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

May 18, 2012

Due to continued case reports locally, the recent death of an infant in Eastern Idaho and Washington's continuing pertussis epidemic, Central District Health Department (CDHD) continues to urge all health care providers to **think pertussis if patients present with a cough illness**. Washington documented 1484 pertussis cases through May 12<sup>th</sup>, compared to 134 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 both 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 at 327-8625.