



Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

Dickinson County

818 Pyle Drive, Kingsford, MI 49802
Ph: (906) 774-1868 Fax: (906) 774-9910
BRANCH OFFICE

www.didhd.org

Iron County

601 Washington Avenue, Iron River, MI 49935
Ph: (906) 265-9913 Fax: (906) 265-2950
MAIN OFFICE

News Release

Contact: Terry Frankovich, M.D. (906-315-2650)
Local Contact: Ruth Holmes, RN BSN (906-779-7227)

Date: December 4, 2014

Immediate Release

PERTUSSIS

Kingsford, Michigan – December 4, 2014. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department reports that there have now been 4 cases of pertussis (whooping cough) confirmed in children attending Dickinson County schools. Reported levels of pertussis activity remain high in Michigan and several other states. Parents are encouraged to make sure that they and their family members are up-to-date on their vaccinations. Most medical providers and all health departments have vaccine on hand.

Health Department Medical Director Teresa Frankovich, M.D. notes that children normally receive a DTaP vaccine, providing protection against pertussis, at 2, 4, 6 and 12-15 months of age, and a booster dose at 4-6 years of age. "Some parents may not realize that another booster dose (called Tdap), is now required for children at 11 years of age. This one-time booster is also recommended for adults who have not had a pertussis vaccine since childhood." Frankovich said. "Because young infants are at highest risk for serious disease with pertussis, it is particularly important that expectant or new parents be vaccinated as well as grandparents and others who have close contact with young children."

Pertussis usually begins with mild upper respiratory symptoms, such as runny nose and mild cough, with little or no fever. It then progresses to a more severe cough, with spasms of coughing which may cause vomiting. Some, but not all individuals, will actually make a whooping sound as they take a breath between coughing spasms. This is how pertussis came to

-More-

be called “whooping cough.” Antibiotics are used to help decrease contagiousness in people with pertussis and can be used to help prevent infection in close contacts, but they do not “cure” the illness and symptoms may last for 6-10 weeks. Complications of pertussis in older children and adults may include pneumonia and rib fractures. As noted above, young infants are most at risk for severe disease and complications such as pneumonia, seizures and rarely, death. Unfortunately, it can be up to three weeks between the time someone is infected with pertussis and the time they actually develop symptoms, so when one new case is identified in the community, additional cases are likely to emerge over the subsequent weeks. Individuals with symptoms of pertussis are generally most contagious in the first two weeks of illness.

Dr. Frankovich reminds parents, “The best way to protect your family is to make sure that everyone in the household is up-to-date on their pertussis vaccinations. It is also important to have your child seen by a healthcare provider if he is sick with pertussis-like symptoms, before sending him to school.” Individuals should call their healthcare provider or the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at 774-1868 or 265-9913, to see if they or their children are due for a pertussis vaccine or to make an appointment to be vaccinated.

Comprehensive pertussis information is available at www.cdc.gov/pertussis.

###