

PERTUSSIS (WHOOPIING COUGH)

A child who attends Northland School has been diagnosed with whooping cough. They were infectious from the 17th of October to 7th of November. The time from contact with the bacteria to getting sick is usually 2 weeks (range from 1 to 3 weeks).

Whooping cough may start with a runny nose which then proceeds to prolonged bouts of coughing. It can be a very serious in babies under 1 year of age and people at risk of severe disease and complications (chronic respiratory conditions, congenital heart disease or immunodeficiency). Adults often do not have the classical whooping and vomiting after bouts of coughing. Treatment is usually a 5 day course of an antibiotic Azithromycin. A person is no longer infectious after 2 days of the antibiotic treatment is completed.

In children under one year of age this can be very serious. Women in the last 4 weeks of pregnancy are advised to see their GP or Lead Maternity Carer.

We recommend the following actions:

- Anyone with a persistent cough should see their doctor, and stay away from school / work/ social activities until the doctor is sure it is not whooping cough.
- Check all your children are up-to-date with their Pertussis (Whooping Cough) immunisations. The Pertussis immunisation is given at six weeks, three months, five months and a booster at 4 and 11 years of age.
- Early childhood workers and health professionals who have contact with babies, pregnant women and immunocompromised people are recommended to have a booster pertussis vaccine (Boostrix Vaccine) every 10 years. Ask your medical centre about the cost for this.
- Pregnant women are strongly recommended to get FREE Boostrix vaccine between weeks 28-38 of pregnancy. This will reduce the risk of getting the disease and passing it onto your new born baby. The vaccine provides protection pre and post-delivery to the mother and to the baby for the first 6 weeks.
- Pregnant women and people with chronic respiratory conditions, congenital heart disease or immunodeficiency are advised to telephone the Communicable Disease Team (Public Health Nurse) on (04) 570 9002 to discuss if you may need antibiotics.

If you have any questions contact your family doctor or practice nurse, or phone the Communicable Disease Team (Public Health Nurse) on (04) 570 9002.

Yours sincerely,

Stacey Henare

Public Health Nurse
For Medical Officer of Health
Disease Prevention

Whooping cough fact sheet

www.rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/illness-and-disease/whooping-cough-pertussis/