

## Health Advisory: Pertussis Increase in Minnesota

Minnesota Department of Health Dec 22, 2016 10:00 CST

### Action Steps:

**Local and tribal health departments:** Please forward to hospitals, clinics, urgent care and convenience clinics in your jurisdiction.

**Hospital and clinics:** Please distribute to health care professionals

#### **Healthcare providers:**

- Test for pertussis in patients presenting with cough illness of more than 7 days, or more than 3 days if known exposure to pertussis.
- Collect nasopharyngeal specimen for PCR or serum specimen for IgG. See [Pertussis - Laboratory Testing \(www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/pertussis/hcp/labfacts.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/pertussis/hcp/labfacts.html).
- **Advise exclusion for the first 5 days of appropriate antibiotic.**
- Report pertussis cases that test positive or are clinically diagnosed to the Minnesota Department of Health.

### Background

Over 1,000 cases of pertussis have been reported since the beginning of 2016 in Minnesota, the highest number of reported cases in 4 years. The increase in pertussis cases is occurring across the state, particularly in the seven-county metro area. Outbreaks are being reported in junior high and high school age students, but cases have been occurring in all age groups.

Cases of pertussis are frequently misdiagnosed as acute onset of asthma, bronchitis, sinusitis with persistent cough, and pneumonia. Pertussis is commonly overlooked because symptoms often resemble “the common cold” in the first few weeks of illness. In addition, vaccinated individuals can have a milder form of pertussis and only present with a prolonged cough. Because individuals with mild pertussis can effectively transmit disease, it is important to still test for pertussis to prevent further transmission.

### Exclusion

Individuals with pertussis are infectious for the first 21 days of cough or through the first 5 days of appropriate antibiotics, whichever occurs first. Individuals being treated for pertussis need to stay home from work, school and activities while they remain infectious. Antibiotics are not recommended if cough duration is greater than 21 days as the individual is no longer infectious and the antibiotics will no longer mediate symptoms.

More information on appropriate antibiotics for pertussis can be found on [Pertussis Treatment and Prophylaxis \(www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/pertussis/hcp/treatment.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/pertussis/hcp/treatment.html).

### Vaccination

Vaccination for all age groups is important for reducing the severity and spread of pertussis. Because immunity to pertussis begins to wane 1-2 years after vaccination, clinicians should ensure the following: on-time vaccination of infants, children and adolescents according to the recommended schedule; recall and catch-up of incompletely vaccinated persons including adults who may not have received Tdap; and Tdap vaccination of pregnant women during each pregnancy.

**Additional information** about pertussis can be found on [Pertussis \(Whooping Cough\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/pertussis/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/pertussis/index.html).

A copy of this HAN is available in PDF and Word format at [www.health.state.mn.us/han/](http://www.health.state.mn.us/han/).

The content of this message is intended for public health and health care personnel and response partners who have a need to know the information to perform their duties. It is for official use only. Do not distribute beyond the intended recipient groups as described in the action items of this message.