

Cumberland Valley District Health Department

P.O. Box 158 ~ 470 Manchester Square, Suite 200 ~ Manchester, Kentucky 40962

Phone: 606-598-5564 ~ Fax: 606-598-6615

Health Department Confirms Pertussis in Jackson County Schools

The Jackson County Health Department has confirmed two cases of Pertussis, also called Whooping Cough, in Jackson County. Both individuals are children who attend Jackson County Schools. With the assistance of Jackson County Schools, the Health Department has sent letters to the parents of students who may have been in close contact with each of the individuals in the classroom or during extracurricular activities.

These are the first cases of Pertussis in Jackson County for many years. The two cases appear to be unrelated.

The health department is recommending preventive antibiotics for high-risk students who were exposed to Pertussis. This includes students with a chronic illness or a weakened immune system. This also includes students who live in a household with a pregnant woman or a baby.

Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory illness. It is spread by coughing and sneezing. It affects people of all ages but can be more serious for infants or those with chronic illnesses.

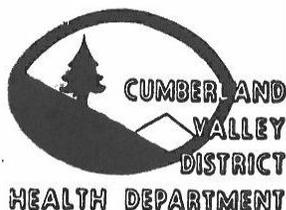
Any school-age children with symptoms of pertussis should stay home from school and visit their health care provider, even if they have already been vaccinated. If a child is found to have probable or confirmed pertussis, he or she should remain out of school until completion of the antibiotic treatment.

The early symptoms are similar to a common cold: runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever and coughing. After 1-2 weeks, the cough often gets worse, changing from a dry, hacking cough to bursts of uncontrollable, sometimes violent, coughing. During a coughing episode, it might be temporarily impossible to take a breath because of the intensity and repetition of the coughs. When finally able to breathe, the person might take a sudden gasp of air, which can cause a “whooping” sound. Vomiting and exhaustion can often follow a coughing spell.

Although the vaccine against Pertussis is effective, immunity tends to decline over time. This makes it important for older children and adults to get a booster shot, called Tdap. Jackson County Health Department has low cost Tdap vaccine available for children and adults.

For more information, call the health department at 606-287-8421, or visit the Cumberland Valley District Website at www.cvdhealthdept.org.

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