



Yukon Koyukuk School District
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To Huslia Community Members,

Several cases of pertussis, also called “whooping cough” have been reported in your local community. **Pertussis can be a very serious disease, especially for infants less than one year old.** Pertussis is a highly contagious disease involving the respiratory tract. It is caused by a bacterium found in the mouth, nose and throat of an infected person. Pertussis begins with cold-like symptoms and a cough that gradually becomes worse. Within two weeks, the cough becomes more severe and is characterized by episodes of numerous rapid coughs sometimes followed by a crowing or high-pitched whoop, or vomiting.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services has provided guidance to us to help prevent additional outbreaks. The District has been advised that it would not be beneficial to close school and in fact, it could make matters worse. Jimmy Huntington will remain open and the staff will be vigilant to recognize symptoms needing immediate attention. Alaska Health and Social Services is sending out two nurses to help the community with identification and treatment. They will also provide community education about whooping cough for those wanting to learn more about the disease. The nurses should arrive in Huslia at the very latest Wednesday.

Immunization against pertussis is the best way to help prevent outbreaks in your community and protect infants. Community members should have their pertussis immunization status verified and updated as appropriate for their age. School age children who have received the required immunizations for school entry should be immunized against pertussis. Adults should receive a one-time booster of Tdap vaccine if they have not had pertussis immunization as an adult.

Pertussis is spread person to person through respiratory droplets typically produced when a person with pertussis coughs or sneezes. Persons with symptoms of pertussis should be careful to limit exposure to others from respiratory secretions, and consult their primary provider. Adults working with infants should be especially careful to avoid spreading pertussis to infants.

For close contacts to cases of pertussis, the State of Alaska Section of Epidemiology has the following recommendations for receiving antibiotics:

Close contacts that should receive Pertussis prophylaxis (antibiotics)

- Infants (<1 year of age);
- Pregnant women in the 3rd trimester, since they will soon have contact with an infant;
- ALL household contacts of a case *IF* there is an infant or a pregnant woman in the 3rd trimester in the same household;
- ALL close contacts who attend/work in a childcare setting in which a case of pertussis was diagnosed *IF* there is an infant or a pregnant woman (3rd trimester) in the setting, or;
- Other contacts at the discretion of SOE (e.g., pediatric health care workers, unimmunized contacts, or other pregnant women).

The mission of the Yukon-Koyukuk School District, in active partnership with its families and communities, is to provide our students with the skills and knowledge necessary to become contributing members of their families, communities and society.

Further recommendations:

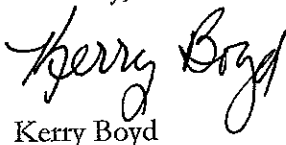
- If adults have not had a pertussis vaccine as an adult, a booster vaccine is recommended to help reduce illness from pertussis in the community and help prevent serious disease in newborns that may be exposed to pertussis. **It is recommended that adults receive one booster of Tdap vaccine.**
- Any child less than 7 years of age who is not up to date on pertussis immunizations should obtain a dose of DTaP vaccine as soon as possible. The most effective way to prevent pertussis is to be up-to-date with pertussis immunization.
- If your child currently has or develops symptoms of pertussis (prolonged cough which may include vomiting), please tell your health care provider. Children who become ill with symptoms of pertussis will need to be treated and stay home for the 5 days of treatment. Children who are ill and do not take the medicine should be excluded from childcare facilities for at least 21 days.
- Adults who develop symptoms of pertussis should contact their primary providers for evaluation. They should avoid exposing others by staying home until 5 days of treatment has been completed.

For more information about pertussis, please visit the State of Alaska Section of Epidemiology website <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/id/dod/pertussis/pertussis.htm> or <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/id/default.stm> and click on the link for pertussis.

If you have questions or concerns regarding these recommendations, you may contact your Public Health Nurse:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding school, please contact your principal or feel free to contact me at the district office in Fairbanks.

Sincerely,


Kerry Boyd



Alaska Division of Public Health

Prevention Promotion Protection

Pertussis: Recommendations for Exclusion of Children and Staff from School, Camps and Team Sports, and other Organized Activities

Pertussis is infectious during the first three weeks of coughing. Treatment and exclusion from school are NOT recommended after that time, although the cough can persist longer.

Symptoms	Exclusions
No symptoms	No exclusion
Upper respiratory symptoms- no cough	No exclusion
Suspected pertussis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cough <7 days in a close contact of a pertussis case • Cough ≥ 7 days in person with low grade fever, vomiting after coughing, paroxysms, or whooping sound with coughing • Cough ≥ 14 days with low grade or no fever, and no alternative diagnosis 	Recommend evaluation by health care provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Lab confirmed pertussis by PCR or culture, and/or</u> • <u>Cough and suspected pertussis diagnosis by health care provider</u> 	Exclude from attendance until: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>5 days antibiotics are completed</u> or • <u>If no antibiotics given, 21 days have passed since onset of cough, or cough has completely resolved</u>
Cough ≤ 7 days in persons at higher risk of transmitting pertussis to infants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close contact to infants or pregnant women • Pregnant women in third trimester 	Recommend evaluation by health care provider.

Chart adapted from Public Health Seattle & King County, WA www.kingcounty.gov/health - 9/2012