

Dear Parent /Guardian,

Pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, has been reported in Pennsylvania, with recent cases being noted in Lancaster County.

Because of this increase, parents are advised to be on the “look out” for symptoms and signs of this disease. Pertussis starts with symptoms of the common cold but after a week or two, severe coughing begins. Prolonged and/or persistent coughing, particularly if it develops into “coughing fits,” may indicate pertussis. People with pertussis may feel exhausted after fits of rapid, severe coughing, which may end with vomiting or a high, pitched “whoop.” Please keep in mind that fully vaccinated people can develop pertussis, although it may present in a milder form.

Pertussis is a bacterium, which is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes in close contact with others, who then breath in the disease-causing bacteria.

Pertussis is a vaccine preventable disease. The recommended pertussis vaccine for children is DTaP. The Tdap vaccine protects adults and adolescents. Both vaccines give protection against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. Children should receive five DTaP shots for best protection against these diseases. Adults should receive a Tdap vaccine every ten years. It is best to check with your family doctor concerning the immunization status of your family and to make any necessary appointments to update immunizations.

Please remember that protection from vaccines can fade over time and there is a chance that a fully vaccinated person may develop pertussis. **Should you or your child develop cold symptoms associated with a severe cough and or prolonged cough, it is best to contact your family doctor.**

More information about Pertussis and how to protect your family best can be found at the following web sites:

HYPERLINK "http://www.cdc.gov/features/pertussis/" <http://www.cdc.gov/features/pertussis/>

To hear the cough of Pertussis: <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/signs-symptoms.html>

HYPERLINK

"http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/diseases_and_conditions/11595" http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/diseases_and_conditions/11595, click on Pertussis

HYPERLINK "http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/bacterial_viral/whooping_cough.html" http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/bacterial_viral/whooping_cough.html

If you should have questions or concerns about your child, please do not hesitate to contact the nurse in his/her school building.