

2/1/2017

Dear Parents,

This is an informational letter to make you aware that I was notified that a child is being treated for symptoms of pertussis. The student attends Hillsboro High School. The student and the contacts have been treated with the appropriate antibiotic therapy and will return to school according to guidelines set forth by the Ohio Department of Health.

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a respiratory infection caused by the bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*. Most of the reported cases occur in children under five years of age, but adolescents and adults who have been immunized against the bacteria can contract this infection, but experience milder symptoms. The infection is spread primarily by direct contact with the discharge from the nose or throat of infected individuals.

The symptoms of pertussis begin as a mild upper respiratory infection and include sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever and a mild cough. However, within two weeks, the cough becomes more severe and is characterized by episodes of numerous rapid coughs followed by a crowing or high-pitched whoop. There may be a thick, clear mucous discharged with the cough. These episodes are more frequent at night and may recur for one to two months. Once again, adolescents and adults who have been immunized against pertussis may have milder symptoms. The incubation period is usually from 1 to 10 days, with a range of 4 to 21 days until symptoms appear. An infected person can transmit pertussis from the onset of symptoms to three weeks after the onset of coughing episodes.

The single most effective control measure is maintaining the highest possible level of immunization in the community and treatment with the appropriate antibiotic.

The Highland County Health Department has advised that adolescents over 11 years old who have not had the recommended booster of the Tdap vaccine required for grades 7-12, should strongly consider boosting their immunity at this time. They would also like to stress the importance of immunizing your child at this time if you have chosen not to do so in the past in an effort to control the spread of this infection.

If your child should develop the above-mentioned symptoms, especially a persistent cough which lasts longer than 2 weeks, please contact your health care provider for confirmation and treatment. If a persistent cough is present, avoid contact with infants or very young children until properly evaluated by a physician.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 393-3132 ext. 5115.

Sincerely,

Laura Johnson, RN, District School Nurse