

Robin Cox, MPH, CPH
Health Education Manager & PIO
Health Promotion and Education Bureau



Michael W. Stacey, MD
Interim Public Health Officer
Jill Cook, MS, RN, PHN
Interim Public Health Deputy Director

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Contact: Michael W. Stacey, MD, Interim Public Health Officer, 784-8607
Robin Cox, MPH, CPH, Health Education Manager, 784-8611

SOLANO PUBLIC HEALTH OFFERS ADDITIONAL PERTUSSIS VACCINATION CLINICS

Pertussis (whooping cough) has reached an “epidemic level” according to health experts at the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). August and September are usually peak months for this highly contagious bacterial disease which is characterized by severe coughing.

To provide easy access to vaccinations, Solano County Public Health is offering special immunization clinics Aug. 11 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at its Family Health Service locations, 365 Tuolumne Street, Vallejo and 2210 Courage Drive, Fairfield.

These special clinics in honor of National Health Center Week are in addition to Public Health’s regular “walk-in” children’s immunization clinics held Tuesdays in Vallejo and Wednesdays in Fairfield. As Solano Public Health organizes more clinics they will be posted at:

www.solanocounty.com/healthalerts.

“California is on track to have the worst year for pertussis in 50 years,” said Michael Stacey, MD, Interim Solano County Public Health Officer. “However locally we have not reached that threshold, and if everyone who needs to be vaccinated, receives a vaccine, hopefully we can prevent many cases in Solano County.”

“Because pertussis vaccine doesn’t give life-long immunity, older children and adults should receive a pertussis booster vaccine (Tdap). This is especially important for those who come in contact with infants,” Dr. Stacey said.

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275 Beck Avenue, P.O. Box 4090, MS 5-240, Fairfield, CA 94533-6804, tel 707 784 8600, fax 707 421 6618

PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION



Health and Social Services Department

Infants who have not received the initial 3 doses of the 5 shot immunization series are extremely vulnerable to pertussis. Family members and caregivers are often the source of infection for infants. In California, seven infants under the age of three months have died from pertussis this year.

Infants between 6 and 8 weeks of age can begin the pertussis vaccination series. However, they're not adequately protected until the initial series of three shots is completed. The series of shots that most children receive wears off by the time they enter middle school.

In addition to the typical series of five childhood pertussis immunizations, an adolescent-adult pertussis booster vaccine (Tdap) is recommended for everyone 10 years or older who has not yet received it, especially:

- women of childbearing age, before, during, or immediately after pregnancy, and
- other people, including household contacts, caregivers, and health care workers, who have contact with pregnant women or infants.

Children 7-9 years of age who did not receive all of their routine childhood shots are also recommended to receive a Tdap booster dose.

"Right now is the time to get immunized to protect yourself and your family," Dr. Stacey emphasized, "for your own protection and to protect those who are most vulnerable in our community."

Regular weekly Public Health Immunization Clinics are held at 9-11 a.m. and 1:30-3:30 Tuesdays at 355 Tuolumne St., Vallejo (new location after renovation of building), and Wednesdays (same hours) at 2101 Courage Dr., Fairfield.

This year to date, Solano County Public Health has had 13 lab confirmed cases of pertussis compared to a total of 8 cases during 2009. Statewide, as of Aug. 3, there have been nearly 2,500 cases of pertussis including seven deaths, all infants under 2 months of age. This is more than a five-fold increase from the same period last year.

Typical symptoms seen in pertussis include:

- Initially cold symptoms such as runny nose and occasional cough with low-grade or no fever.
- After 1-2 weeks: cough becomes more severe with bursts of rapid coughs, often ending with a "whoop" sound and sometimes causing vomiting.
- Cough may last up to 10 weeks with more frequent coughing attacks at night.
- May appear very ill and distressed even turning blue during coughing attacks, especially in infants and young children.