



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Helpful reminders for the 2018 Pertussis season

SOLANO COUNTY – Public Health officials want to remind Solano County residents about how to prevent and treat pertussis (whooping cough) as some Bay Area counties start to see an increase in cases.

Pertussis cases usually cycle and peak every three to five (3-5) years. The last pertussis epidemic occurred in 2014 with over 10,800 cases reported, including two infant deaths and hundreds of hospitalizations.

In 2017, there were fourteen (14) pertussis cases in Solano County. In 2018, Solano County has had twelve (12) reported cases of pertussis compared to six (6) by this time last year and ten (10) by this time in 2016. Other Bay Area counties are seeing a significant increase compared to this time last year. In Alameda County for example, there have been 180 pertussis cases as of May 2018, compared to 40 cases at the same time in 2017.

Pertussis is commonly referred to as "whooping cough," and it spreads by wet droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. People with whooping cough can spread the disease from the time they get a runny nose until three (3) weeks after their cough starts. It is a very contagious disease of the lungs and respiratory system. Infants are the most vulnerable to serious complications such as hospitalizations or death.

Symptoms of pertussis are initially like those of a cold and may include runny nose, low/no fever, and mild cough. After one to two weeks, symptoms can include vomiting, breathing problems, extreme fatigue, and coughing with a whooping sound. For babies, symptoms can also include gasping or gagging, stopped breathing, and seizures.

Bela Matyas, MD, MPH, Health Officer for Solano County, states that "vaccination is the key to pertussis prevention." Routine childhood immunizations include pertussis vaccination at two, four, six and fifteen to eighteen (2, 4, 6, 15-18) months; and four to six (4-6) years of age; and again at eleven to twelve (11-12) years of age. Pertussis vaccination is required for kindergarten and middle school entry. All adults should get at least one dose.

Those at highest risk for pertussis include:

- **Infants younger than one year of age**
- **Pregnant women in their third trimester of pregnancy;** getting the pertussis vaccine, Tdap, while pregnant helps protect the baby

- **Caregivers and household contacts of infants and pregnant women**
- **Everyone in child care settings with infants**
- **Child care facilities and schools with low vaccination rates**

Individuals who experience symptoms of pertussis should contact their healthcare provider early in the illness. Pertussis is generally treated with antibiotics to help prevent spreading the disease to close contacts. People with pertussis should stay home until the antibiotics are completed.

For more information about the Pertussis vaccine, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/dtap-tdap-td/public/index.html>

For locations that offer the pertussis vaccine, visit <http://VaccineFinder.org>.

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