

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 6/28/2017**

TO: Grant County Media

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT**

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## **Whooping Cough Cases in Grant County** **GCHD staff investigating 12 confirmed cases**

**GRANT COUNTY, WA** – Grant County Health District (GCHD) staff are investigating 12 confirmed cases and of pertussis (whooping cough), with additional tests pending. All confirmed cases are within the Ephrata and Moses Lake community. None of the cases have been hospitalized. There is the potential for more cases to occur. All family, “close” contacts have been notified by GCHD, offered and started on post-exposure prophylaxis.

In an effort to control the spread of the disease, the Grant County Health Officer has recommended antibiotics for individuals who have come into close contact with the ill individuals. **Antibiotics are not recommended to the general public.** The highest priority is given to infants, those who come in close contact with children under 12 months of age, and pregnant women.

Whooping cough (pertussis) is a highly contagious disease only found in humans and is spread through the air. People with whooping cough usually spread the disease by coughing, sneezing or spending a lot of time near one another where breathing space is shared. Many babies who get whooping cough are infected by older siblings, parents, or caregivers who may not know they have the disease.

Symptoms of whooping cough usually develop within 5 to 10 days; but can present up to 3 weeks following exposure.

**If you have symptoms of whooping cough AND think you may have been exposed, please discuss this with your healthcare provider or call GCHD and speak with a Public Health Nurse (509-766-7960).** It is important to wear a mask (when available) covering your mouth and nose when you visit your doctor’s office to help stop the spread of the disease. Always follow medical directives and stay isolated from others until it is determined that you are not contagious.

**Early symptoms** can last for 1 to 2 weeks and usually include:

- Runny nose
- Low-grade fever (generally minimal throughout the course of the disease)
- Mild, occasional cough
- Apnea – a pause in breathing (in babies)

Because whooping cough in its early stages appears to be nothing more than the common cold, it is often not suspected or diagnosed until the more severe symptoms appear.



**Late symptoms-** After 1 to 2 weeks and as the disease progresses, the traditional symptoms of whooping cough may appear and include:

- Long series of coughs (“coughing fits”),
- Rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched "whoop"
- Vomiting during or after coughing fits
- Turning blue or difficulty catching breath during or after coughing fits
- Exhaustion after coughing fits

### **Action Requested for parents and families**

**Please make sure that you and your family are all properly vaccinated with pertussis vaccines. A pertussis (Tdap) shot is recommended for all who are not up to date.** The vaccine reduces the chance that a person will become sick with pertussis. Getting pertussis does not prevent one from getting it again in the future.

- DTaP pertussis vaccine is only given to children under age 7 years;
- Tdap vaccine can be given at or after 7 years of age if your child is not properly vaccinated.
- Tdap is also given to all children around 11-12 years of age per routine vaccination schedule.
  - If you have children less than 7 years of age who have not been completely immunized against pertussis (particularly infants under one year) we recommend you talk to your child’s doctor about the benefits of vaccination.
  - Talk to your doctor if they are older than 11 and have not yet received their routine Tdap.
- **Adults should have a Tdap (Pertussis) vaccine at least once in their adult life, while pregnant women are recommended to have Tdap each pregnancy. Tdap can be given no matter when Td (tetanus and diphtheria vaccine) was last received.**
- Basically, anyone with cough of more than 2 weeks duration should be evaluated for pertussis or other reasons for their cough.

### **High risk populations**

- Children < 1 year old,
- Unimmunized children and adults,
- Pregnant women < 7 months gestation and
- Immunocompromised individuals.

### **Addition Resources and Report form:**

[Washington State Department of Health](#)

### **Consultation**

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