

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 06/16/2017**

TO: Grant County Media

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT**

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## **Whooping Cough Cases in Grant County** **GCHD staff investigating 3 confirmed cases in Ephrata**

**GRANT COUNTY, WA** – Grant County Health District (GCHD) staff are investigating three confirmed cases and one probable case of pertussis (Whooping Cough), with additional cases pending. All cases are within the Ephrata 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 a defined number of 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 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.

**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 your child is 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 child's doctor if they are older than 11 and have not yet received their routine Tdap.

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

[Washington State Department of Health](#)

#### **Consultation**

Stephanie Lafferty, Public Health Nurse

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