

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 5/22/2018

TO: Grant County Healthcare Providers & Media

FOR INFORMATION CONTACTHeather Massart, Public Information Officer (PIO)
509-766-7960 ext. 16Kari Hitzroth, RN, Public Health Nurse
509-766-7960 ext. 13

Whooping Cough Cases in Grant County

GCHD staff investigating 4 confirmed cases

GRANT COUNTY, WA –Grant County Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Brzezny, has issued the following alert to the Grant County healthcare community and media: Grant County Health District (GCHD) staff are investigating four Grant County laboratory confirmed cases of Whooping Cough (pertussis). All individuals are within a single household and the investigation to date suggests that the overall risk to the community is low. **There is the potential for more cases to occur.** All family members with a “close” contact to those with whooping cough have been notified by GCHD and offered post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) with antibiotics.

Whooping Cough/ pertussis is a very contagious disease only found in humans. People with pertussis usually spread the disease by coughing, sneezing or when spending a lot of time near one another where you share breathing space. Many babies who get pertussis are infected by older siblings, parents, or caregivers who might not even know they have the disease.

Symptoms of pertussis 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 pertussis 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 pertussis may appear and include:

- Paroxysms (fits) of many, rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched "whoop"
- Vomiting during or after coughing fits

- Exhaustion after coughing fits

Action requested for parents and families-

If you and/ or a household member are experiencing signs and symptoms of pertussis please contact your healthcare provider. And remembers, always wear a mask while you are in a healthcare facility if you have symptoms.

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.

Actions requested and testing for providers

When evaluating patients suspected for pertussis, please test, treat, and isolate those who are symptomatic. Practitioners evaluating contacts to a recent case of pertussis should also consider a post-exposure prophylaxis with appropriate antibiotics. The priority for post-exposure prophylaxis should be assigned to those who may transmit pertussis to persons at high risk for pertussis. High risk is defined as:

1. Infants < 1 year old.
2. Pregnant women (particularly in their third trimester).
3. Anyone who may expose infants < 1 year old or pregnant women.
 - a. e.g., members of a household with infants or pregnant women,
 - b. child care workers who take care of infants < 1 year old,
 - c. health care workers and childbirth educators with face-to-face contact with infants < 1 year old or pregnant women.

It is appropriate to offer vaccine (Tdap) to all individuals without a proof of immunity.

Resources

[Washington State Department of Health report guidelines](#) | WA- DOH

[Vaccination Information for Healthcare Professionals](#) | CDC

Consultation

Kari Hitzroth, RN, Public Health Nurse,
509-766-7960 ext. 13 or khitzroth@granthealth.org