



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

NORTH CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

“Caring For Our Communities”

419 East Seventh Street, The Dalles, OR 97058

Phone: 541-506-2600 Fax: 541-506-2601

Website: www.ncphd.org

January 16, 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are writing to let you know that we have had a confirmed case of pertussis (whooping cough) in a student at The Dalles High School. The dates during which your child may have been exposed are December 25, 2017 to January 14, 2018. Pertussis is a contagious disease that is spread easily from person to person by coughing. Most children and adults get vaccinated in childhood; however it is possible for vaccinated persons to become infected with pertussis.

Pertussis usually begins with sneezing, runny nose, and other cold symptoms and a mild cough that worsens over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms may include coughing attacks followed by a high-pitched “whoop” noise when breathing in, gagging or vomiting after coughing, and trouble breathing. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help eliminate the cough. One usually does not have a fever with pertussis. A person with pertussis can appear to be well between the bursts of coughing. Coughing attacks may continue for four to six weeks or more.

Although vaccination protects against life-threatening pertussis, adults and children may catch pertussis and get a mild illness, even if they have had all or some of their immunizations (DTaP or Tdap). In older children and adults the symptoms may be only a persistent cough which is worse at night.

This illness is often very severe in small infants. Therefore, it is important that you make sure all your children are up to date on their immunizations. Pregnant women who have been exposed to children with Pertussis are also at high risk and should follow up with their provider.

If your child becomes sick, early antibiotics can help your child get well faster and reduce the risk of spreading pertussis to others. **Therefore, if your child comes down with cold symptoms within the next 3 weeks that include a cough, talk to your child’s health care provider without delay and inform them that there has been pertussis identified in your child’s school.**

If you have questions please call, your health care provider or North Central Public Health District at (541) 506-2600. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Miriam D. McDonell, MD, FACOG

Health Officer
North Central Public Health District