



HEALTH ADVISORY

Increased Pertussis Cases in School-Aged Children

June 1, 2018

Since January 2018, Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) has noted a marked increase in reported pertussis cases in school-aged children across the county, and clusters of pertussis cases in some schools. Most cases have occurred in high school-aged children. Like the rest of California, Alameda County has experienced a cyclical increase in pertussis cases every 3 to 5 years; the most recent peaks were in 2010, 2014, and now, 2018.

Clinicians are requested to:

1. **Suspect pertussis early** in a child with cold-like symptoms with cough if there is a history of exposure to a pertussis case. Also consider pertussis if the cough is prolonged, paroxysmal, or accompanied by post-tussive vomiting.
2. **Test** children with pertussis symptoms, regardless of whether you treat immediately or based on test results. A nasopharyngeal (NP) aspirate is preferred. If collecting a NP swab, use a polyester, rayon, or nylon-flocked swab. ACPHD acts on lab confirmed cases. We conduct a contact investigation to identify and notify high-risk contacts who should receive post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). High-risk contacts include infants, pregnant women in their third trimester, and persons who live with, care for, or work with infants or pregnant women.
3. **Treat** children with suspected or confirmed pertussis according to the guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) 2018 Red Book, which are included in the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Pertussis Quicksheet (<http://tinyurl.com/ycely9mk>).
4. **Recommend children with pertussis to avoid contact with high risk persons** (defined in #2) who live outside of the household until they've taken 5 days of antibiotics. CDPH recommends that when pertussis is known to be widespread in the community, K-12 students may be allowed to attend classes once they have started antibiotics. ACPHD recommends that students take ≥ 3 days of antibiotics before returning to school. This differs from the AAP guidelines that recommend school exclusion for children until they've taken 5 days of antibiotics.
5. **Report to ACPHD** suspected or confirmed cases of pertussis. Call 510-267-3250 or fax a Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) form to 510-273-3744 within 1 working day of diagnosis. ACPHD conducts contact investigations and works with schools or camps to identify the classes or groups exposed, and to send an exposure notice to contacts.
6. **Provide PEP** to asymptomatic children who have received a school exposure notice if they live in a household with high-risk persons (defined in #2), according to guidelines in the CDPH Pertussis Quicksheet (link in #3).
7. **Vaccinate** pregnant women with Tdap during the 3rd trimester of every pregnancy at 27-36 weeks. Ensure your patients are up to date according to Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) guidelines.

Additional resources:

- ACPHD pertussis website – www.acphd.org/pertussis.aspx
- CDPH Pertussis website – www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/pertussis.aspx

Health ALERT: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health ADVISORY: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health UPDATE: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.