



WELLNESS Newsletter

Fall
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This publication is brought to you by the District Wellness Council which is dedicated to educating R-H families about important topics to keep your children healthy.

Pertussis 101: More than just a cough

Pertussis is a highly contagious disease of the lungs. Pertussis can cause serious illness in all ages but can be life-threatening in infants. Pertussis has been called “whooping cough” because of the “whooping” sound that is made when gasping for air after a fit of coughing. Before the vaccine was developed, whooping cough was considered a childhood disease. Now, whooping cough primarily affects children too young to have completed the full course of vaccinations and teenagers and adults whose immunity has faded.

According to the Centers for Disease Control:

- Worldwide, there are an estimated 16 million cases of pertussis and about 195,000 deaths per year.
- Approximately half of babies less than 1 year old who get pertussis need to be hospitalized.
- The most effective way to prevent pertussis is through vaccination.
- Vaccinated children and adults can become infected with and spread pertussis; however, disease is typically much less serious in vaccinated people.
- Pertussis is generally treated with antibiotics, which are used to control the symptoms and to prevent infected people from spreading the disease.
- Since the 1980s, there has been an increase in the number of reported cases of pertussis in the United States. In 2010, an increase in reported cases among children ages 7-10 was seen. Similar trends have occurred in more recent years with teenagers.
- Coughing fits due to pertussis infection can last for 10 weeks or more; this disease is sometimes known as the “100-day cough.”

Important Links And Contacts

Centers for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis>

Healthy NY

https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/pertussis/fact_sheet.htm

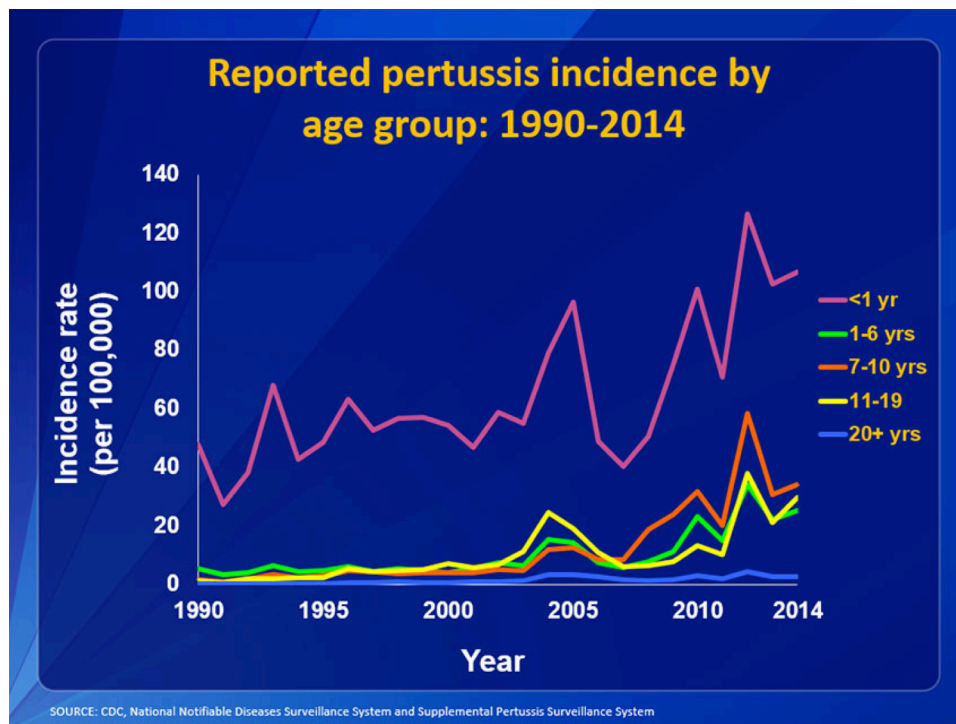
Monroe County Health Department

Child Immunization Clinic

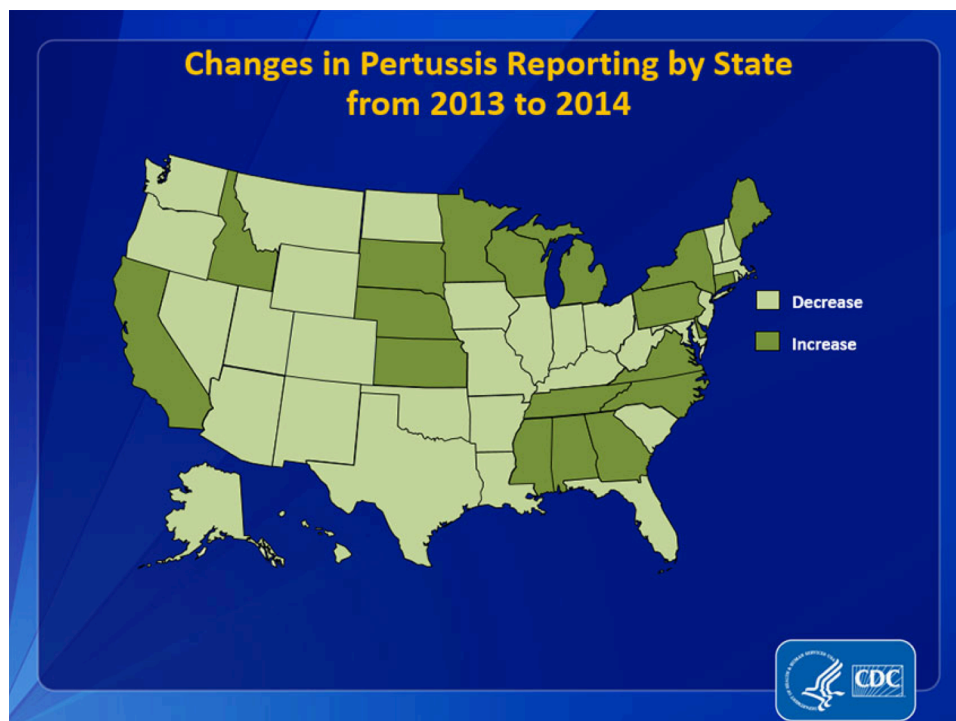
753-5150

You can e-mail directly at
immclinic@monroecounty.gov to
ask general questions

<http://www2.monroecounty.gov/health-index.php>



This graph shows reported pertussis incidence (per 100,000 persons) by age group in the United States from 1990 to 2014. Infants less than a year old, who are at greatest risk for serious disease and death, continue to have the highest reported rate of pertussis. School-age children, ages 7 to 10, continue to contribute a significant proportion of reported pertussis cases.



Symptoms of Pertussis

Once you become infected with whooping cough, it takes about seven to 10 days for signs and symptoms to appear, though it can sometimes take longer. They are usually mild at first and resemble those of a common cold:

- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Red, watery eyes
- Fever
- Cough

After a week or two, signs and symptoms worsen. Thick mucus accumulates inside your airways, causing uncontrollable coughing. Severe and prolonged coughing attacks may:

- Provoke vomiting
- Result in a red or blue face
- Cause extreme fatigue
- End with a high-pitched "whoop" sound during the next breath of air

However, many people don't develop the characteristic whoop. Sometimes, a persistent hacking cough is the only sign that an adolescent or adult has whooping cough.

Infants may not cough at all. Instead, they may struggle to breathe, or they may even temporarily stop breathing.

When to See a Health Care Provider

Call your doctor if prolonged coughing spells cause you or your child to:

- Vomit
- Turn red or blue
- Seem to be struggling to breathe or have noticeable pauses in breathing
- Inhale with a whooping sound

Pertussis Prevention

The best way to prevent pertussis (whooping cough) among babies, children, teens, and adults is to get vaccinated. Also, keep babies and other people at high risk for pertussis complications away from infected people.

In the United States, the recommended pertussis vaccine for babies and children is called DTaP. This is a combination vaccine that helps protect against three diseases: diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis.

The childhood whooping cough vaccine (DTaP) protects most children for at least five years. Vaccine protection for these three diseases fades with time. Before 2005, the only booster (called Td) available contained protection against tetanus and diphtheria, and was recommended for teens and adults every 10 years. Today, there is a booster (called Tdap) for preteens, teens, and adults that contains protection against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis.