



# DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

111 North County Farm Road, Wheaton, Illinois 60187

(630) 682-7400

[www.dupagehealth.org](http://www.dupagehealth.org)

## **PERTUSSIS (WHOOPING COUGH) FACT SHEET FOR SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE CENTERS**

Pertussis (whooping cough) is a highly infectious and usually mild illness that is easily transmitted through coughing and sneezing and may last for several months. Symptoms of pertussis may appear 5 to 10 days following exposure but can take up to 21 days to develop. The first symptoms of pertussis are similar to those of a common cold: a runny nose, low-grade fever and a mild occasional cough for at least 2 weeks, which can become severe and spasmodic--with a distinctive "whooping" sound--and may trigger vomiting after a coughing episode. Even though the disease may be milder in older children, adolescents, and adults, **those who are infected may unknowingly transmit the disease to other vulnerable persons, including unimmunized or incompletely immunized infants.**

Following increased disease activity from 2010 and early 2011, **we have continued to receive reports of pertussis (whooping cough) cases throughout the summer and fall**, with the majority occurring in children and adolescents. **As the 2011-2012 academic year progresses, we appreciate your cooperation and vigilance toward early detection, treatment, and prevention of pertussis cases, particularly in school settings among students.**

Most people recover completely from pertussis, **but complications from the disease can be severe and possibly life-threatening in high risk groups, especially infants under one year**, and children who have not been fully immunized against the disease.

**Students or staff who exhibit any of the symptoms of pertussis should contact their physician to arrange for appropriate testing and treatment with antibiotics.** Patients with pertussis must be isolated from day care, school, work, and public gatherings until at least 5 days after the start of appropriate antibiotic therapy.

Since infants, children and adults are best protected from pertussis by immunizations, please review the immunization records of your child as well as your own. Students and staff who have not received all recommended shots should contact your physician to arrange for the following immunizations: **1) infants and young children should receive a series of DTaP vaccines in their first 5 years of life**, and **2) adolescents and adults should receive a single Tdap vaccine at 11 years of age or older.**

*In addition, frequent handwashing and respiratory hygiene (e.g. covering your cough, coughing into tissues, disposing of tissues promptly) are important practices that help to limit the spread of this and other similar infections.*

**If you or your physician have any further questions, please contact the DuPage County Health Department at 630-221-7553.** More information on pertussis disease and vaccination is available at: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pertussis/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pertussis/). Thank you for your time and cooperation, and best wishes for a healthy and productive academic year.

11/1/11

*Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday*

In an emergency go to [www.protectdupage.org](http://www.protectdupage.org) and tune into WDCB 90.9 fm radio.