

News Release

For Immediate Release

August 23, 2012

Contact: Myra Stoney, Director or Jamey Keen, Public Health Nurse - Southwest NE Public Health Department 308-345-4223

Pertussis is on the Rise - Immunizations are Available

McCook- Pertussis (whooping cough) is increasing both nationally and in Nebraska, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). In Nebraska, there were 21 reports of pertussis reported from January through April, 2012. The numbers continue to rise with 15 reports in May; 27 in June; 35 in July, for a total of 98. These numbers are frustrating considering pertussis can be preventable through proper vaccination.

“Pertussis is preventable with immunization administration starting as young as two months of age and by making sure your adolescent and adult boosters are up-to-date,” states Jamey Keen, Public Health Nurse. Children should receive pertussis as part of their scheduled immunizations at the ages of two, four, six and 15 months of age and again at four-six years of age with a booster between 11-12 years of age. Parents should ensure that their infants and young children are vaccinated with pertussis-containing vaccines on schedule, using the shortest recommended interval, to help protect them against pertussis infection.

“In partnership with Sanofi-Pasteur, through their “Give Immunity Fight Transmission” (GIFT) program, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department is offering free Tdap vaccines to Children and Adults ages 11-64 years of age who do not have health insurance,” states Jamey Keen, Public Health Nurse. “For those who do have insurance, we offer Tdap at a discounted price.”

Pertussis is spread when infected people cough or sneeze droplets that contain the *Bordetella pertussis* bacteria. Symptoms of whooping cough usually start with cold-like symptoms such as runny nose, sneezing, fever and mild cough between six to 21 days after they have been exposed to the pertussis bacteria. Individuals are most contagious from the beginning of cold-like symptoms until three weeks after coughing episodes begin.

Classic coughs associated with pertussis can persist for weeks or months and typically occur as sudden, violent coughing episodes, sometimes followed by vomiting. However, coughs due to pertussis in adolescents and adults may be difficult to distinguish from coughs due to colds or influenza. Since pertussis symptoms in adolescents and adults can be mild compared to the classic pertussis cough, it is likely to be under-diagnosed in these populations and easily transmitted to vulnerable infants and children.

The pertussis vaccine is usually given along with tetanus and diphtheria combined into one vaccine or one shot. Children ages 4-6 years and younger receive the DTaP, Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis and at 11-12 years of age, receive the Tdap, Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis booster. Adults ages 19 to 64 should receive one dose of Tdap instead of the Td (tetanus and diphtheria) vaccine and then have Td boosters every 10 years. If you had the Td vaccine in the last 10 years, ask your health care provider if you also need the Tdap vaccine to protect you against whooping cough.

Children less than 1 year of age are usually exposed or infected by older siblings and parents. Newborns are at the highest risk of complications and death. Because the vaccine protects against pertussis, the following people should make sure they are up to date with their Tdap immunization, regardless of age, but especially the following:

- Adults who are in contact with infants under 12 months (regardless of when you last received a Td vaccine)
- New mothers who have never received Tdap
- Health care workers who are in direct contact with patients
- Pregnant women after 20 weeks of pregnancy, preferably in the third trimester

Children and adults who have had a severe cut or burn may need Tdap to protect against tetanus infection.

RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS

Tdap may cause the following mild side effects, which usually last only a few days:

- Body aches
- Chills
- Fever
- Headache
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Rash
- Redness or swelling at the injection site
- Soreness at the injection site

CONSIDERATIONS

You should not get the Tdap vaccine if you:

- Have had a severe allergic reaction to the vaccine
- Have a severe allergy to any ingredient in the vaccine
- Went into a coma or had a seizure within 7 days after receiving the DTaP vaccine

Talk to your health care provider before getting the Tdap vaccine if you or your child:

- Have epilepsy or another nervous system problem

- Had severe swelling or pain after receiving any vaccination containing tetanus, diphtheria, or pertussis
- Have had Guillain-Barre syndrome – a severe paralysis.
- Have a severe allergy to latex

If you or your child has a moderate or severe illness, you can delay Tdap vaccination until the illness is gone. People with a mild illness can usually still receive the vaccination.

If you cannot take the pertussis vaccine (for example, because of an allergic reaction), you should still receive a vaccine against diphtheria and tetanus (DT for children and Td for adults).

For more information or to schedule a time, contact Jamey at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department at 308-345-4223. More information is also available at www.swhealth.ne.gov or on Facebook and Twitter. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (1 block north of Arby's) serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins and Red Willow counties.

Influenza vs. Colds vs. Pertussis

Symptom		Influenza ("Flu")	Colds (Viral URI)	Pertussis
Fever		Usually present & high (102-104°F or 39-40°C); typically lasts 3-4 days	Uncommon If present, typically low-grade	Uncommon If present, typically low-grade
Chills		Common	Uncommon	Rare
Headache		Very common	Uncommon	Uncommon
Aches and pains, muscle aches, chest discomfort		Very common Often severe	Slight to Moderate	Uncommon
Fatigue and weakness		Moderate - severe; can last up to 14-21 days	Mild	Mild; Patient usually appears well between coughing attacks
Extreme exhaustion		Very common early in illness	Extremely Rare	Rare
Stuffy or runny nose		Common	Very common	Common, early in the disease
Sneezing		Sometimes	Common	Common, early in the disease
Sore throat		Common	Common	Uncommon
Cough	Character	Non-productive ("dry") cough is typical	Hacking cough, often productive; usually responds to cough medications	Variable character; fits / paroxysms and nocturnal cough are common; generally not responsive to cough medications; "whooping" may or may not occur
	Severity	Moderate	Mild to Moderate	Variable; mild to severe; infants appear quite ill and may present with cough or apnea
	Duration	Typically 3-7 days; occasionally to 14 days	Typically 3-7 days	Persistent cough, almost always >1 week, usually 2-6 weeks, sometimes 10+ weeks
	Paroxysms (coughing fits)	Uncommon	Rare	Common; often leads to vomiting or gagging
Infectious Period		1 day before symptom onset and 3-7 days after	Variable; typically 4-7 days after symptom onset; can be longer	From start of catarrhal phase (before cough onset) to 21 days after cough onset* Most efficient spreading after cough onset

*or until taking 5 days of appropriate anti-pertussis antibiotics

Iowa Department of Public Health 12/10/04 (updated 12/08/10)

Provided by Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serving 8 counties: Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins, & Red Willow

###