



Paul R. LePage, Governor

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Department of Health and Human Services
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To: Parents/Guardians
From: School Nurses
Subject: Exposure to Pertussis
Date: June 4, 2013

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) is investigating some cases of pertussis also known as (whooping cough) at Wells Junior High and Wells High School.

Pertussis is an illness that is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. Pertussis usually begins with symptoms of a common cold (sore throat, and runny nose) and often develops into a severe cough after a few weeks. The cough can last for several weeks or more. Most children are vaccinated against pertussis, but it is still possible for vaccinated children to become ill. Babies are most at risk of serious illness.

To prevent the spread of pertussis in your community, we are making the following recommendations:

1. If your child has or severe cough (may include coughing to the point of gagging, vomiting after coughing or difficulty breathing) or a prolonged cough lasting 2 weeks or longer, please take your child home and contact your health care provider. If your provider suspects pertussis, they will obtain a specimen to be sent for pertussis testing.
2. Children/Adults with severe cough, prolonged cough or confirmed pertussis will be started on antibiotics and will need to remain at home for 5 days while taking these antibiotics.
3. Please check with your medical provider to be sure you and your child are up-to-date on pertussis vaccine. Most children have had vaccine before the age 7 years, but their immunity to the disease may gradually wane over time. Booster shots (Tdap) are now recommended for children 11-18 years old. A single Tdap shot is also recommended for adults, especially adults who have contact with infants and young children.

If you have further questions, please contact your school nurse or the Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.

Thank you.