



WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
&
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

For Immediate Release

August 19, 2008

News media calls to Vic Reato: Media Services Manager at (815)727-5088.

HEALTH DEPARTMENTALERT FOR PERTUSSIS INCIDENCE

JOLIET – The Will County Health Department is monitoring the local incidence of pertussis in the wake of disease activity reported across Chicagoland.

Pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, is a potentially serious and highly contagious illness transmitted through direct contact with discharges from the mouth or nose of infected persons. Anyone is susceptible, but pertussis infections tend to be more severe in infants and young children. Pneumonia and other complications are also most common in the very young.

More than 35 percent of U.S. cases occur in children six months old or younger. Pertussis cases in infants often lead to hospitalization.

Small clusters of pertussis have recently been reported from Lake, Cook and DuPage counties. The Will County Health Department has reported at least nine 2008 cases, including five since August 1. In light of the potential for additional cases, the Health Department urges individuals to consult a physician regarding coughs that persist for more than two weeks, appear to be worse at night and sound different than a typical upper respiratory cough.

Initial pertussis symptoms are similar to those of a common cold, but do not respond to over-the-counter medications. A pertussis cough gradually worsens and may last for several months. Coughing spasms can end with vomiting or the characteristic, high-pitched "Whoop." Symptoms usually appear five or 10 days after exposure, but the incubation period may be three weeks.

Persons with suspicious symptoms should stay home and consult a health care provider. Early antibiotic treatment can alleviate symptoms and reduce the potential for further disease transmission.

Adolescents and adults with unrecognized, undiagnosed pertussis can often be the source of infection for small infants and children. People exhibiting cough illnesses of unknown origin should avoid contact with babies younger than six months old and pregnant women.

Since pertussis is a vaccine preventable disease, parents should make sure children receive the recommended immunization schedule. Booster immunizations for adults are also available.

For immunizations, please consult your health care provider or the Will County Health Department's immunization desk at: 815-740-8143.

Main Office
501 Ella Avenue
Joliet, IL 60433
Ph 815.727.8480
Fx 815.727.8484

Community Health Center
1106 Neal Avenue
Joliet, IL 60433
Ph 815.727.8670
Fx 815.727.8852

Eastern Branch Office
44 Towncenter
University Park, IL 60466
Ph 815.727.8803
Ph 708.534.0800
Fx 708.534.3455

Northern Branch Office
323 Quadrangle Dr.
Bolingbrook, IL 60440
Ph 630.679.7000
Fx 630.679.7015