



WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
&
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

To: **Will County Health Care Providers, Hospitals, Infection Control Practitioners, Schools, and Childcare Facilities**

From: **Epidemiology & Communicable Disease Program
Will County Health Department**

Date: December 6, 2010

Re: **Pertussis**

In 2010, several states including Illinois have reported an increase in cases of pertussis (whooping cough). In Will County, we are not seeing an increase in the number of reported cases of pertussis when compared to previous years.

Pertussis begins with mild upper respiratory symptoms that may include a runny nose, sneezing, and a mild cough. The infection can progress to severe paroxysms of cough, often with a characteristic inspiratory “whoop” which can be followed by vomiting. Adolescents and adults may have a persistent cough without a “whoop” or may have persistent coughing at night.

If anyone exhibits any symptoms of pertussis, they should immediately contact a physician for appropriate testing. To diagnose pertussis, culture or PCR testing is the most accurate method using a nasopharyngeal aspirate or nasopharyngeal decron swab. The swabs should be placed in selective media or Regan Lowe transport media.

Pertussis can usually be treated on an outpatient basis with antibiotics; erythromycin, clarithromycin, and azithromycin are preferred for the treatment of pertussis in persons ≥ 1 month of age. For infants < 1 month of age, azithromycin is preferred for post exposure prophylaxis and treatment. **Patients treated / prophylaxed for Pertussis should not attend work or school until 5 days of antibiotic treatment have been completed because they are infectious to others.** People that have been in close contact with children or adults with pertussis need preventative treatment as well. Hospitalized cases should be kept on droplet isolation until 5 days of effective treatment. Exposed medical staff should be prophylaxed with appropriate therapy and questioned daily for 21 days after exposure about possible pertussis symptoms.

Please report any cases of cough illness that have lasted for greater than 2 weeks without an apparent cause to the Communicable Disease Section of the Will County Health Department by ph: (815)740-4427 or by fax: (815)727-8833. It is important we investigate these cases in order to prevent the further spread of this disease. If you have any questions regarding pertussis or reporting procedures, please call the CD staff at the above mentioned phone number. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

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