



October 9, 2014

Dear Physicians & Health Care Workers

Re: Recent Increase in Pertussis Cases in Saskatoon Health Region

There have been multiple pertussis (*Bordetella pertussis*) cases diagnosed in the Saskatoon Health Region recently and a number of contacts identified. There have been hospitalized pediatric cases. Cases or contacts may present to your practice for assessment, testing & treatment/chemoprophylaxis. If patients have suggestive symptoms and/or have been identified as contacts, consider pertussis as part of your differential. The 2011 guidelines for management of cases and contacts are available at the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health Communicable Disease Control Manual <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/cdc-section2#page=169> or contacting our office.

Symptoms:

- Develop 6-20 days after exposure (average 9-10 days).
- Catarrhal Stage: starts with mild respiratory symptoms of cough, rhinorrhea and fever usually minimal throughout illness.
- Paroxysmal Stage: paroxysms of cough characterized by inspiratory whoop and vomiting after cough.
 - Adolescents, adults and children partially protected by the vaccine may have milder disease than infants and young children. These people may be asymptomatic, or present with illness ranging from a mild cough to classic pertussis with persistent cough. Inspiratory whoop is not common in this group.
- Convalescent Stage: gradual recovery with cough lasting 1-2 months or longer.

Testing:

- Nasal pharyngeal swab (universal transport medium).

Communicability:

- Highly communicable in early catarrhal stage and beginnings of the paroxysmal stage.
- Cases are no longer communicable after completing 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment (see attachment).

Vulnerable persons (most at risk for complications, including death):

- Infants under 1 years of age (this includes pregnant women in their last trimester, as there is risk that mother may transmit infection to newborn).

Immunization

- Tetanus, diphtheria & pertussis (Tdap) immunization is recommended as a one time dose for all adults.
- Pertussis is part of the routine immunization schedule for all children ages 2, 4, 6, 18 months and 4 years. A booster dose is given in grade 8.

If you suspect pertussis, test, treat (according to guidelines) and report to Communicable Disease Control at 306-655-4612.

Sincerely,

Dr. Johnmark Opondo, M.B., ChB., M.PH.

Deputy Medical Health Officer

Saskatoon Health Region

Healthiest people ~ Healthiest communities ~ Exceptional service