



Office of the Medical Health Officers

Idylwyld Centre
204 – 310 Idylwyld Drive North
Saskatoon, SK S7L 0Z2

Tel: 306-655-4612; Fax: 306-655-4723

Notice about Pertussis Cases

September 8 2016

Saskatoon Health Region has been seeing an increase in pertussis (whooping cough) cases in the past two weeks.

Pertussis starts with mild respiratory symptoms of cough and rhinorrhea. A fever is usually minimal throughout illness (Catarrhal Stage). It then progresses to paroxysms of cough characterized by inspiratory whoop and vomiting after cough (Paroxysmal Stage). The disease then has a gradual recovery with cough lasting 1-2 months or longer. Infants with pertussis may not have coughing fits; instead they may have trouble breathing and gag, gasp, turn blue or vomit.

Reminder! 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.

Patients with pertussis often seek physician assessment multiple times before they are tested and diagnosed with pertussis. Consider pertussis as part of your differential diagnosis and swab patients (nasal pharyngeal swab in viral transport medium). Early diagnosis helps stop the spread of pertussis! Case investigations are done by Communicable Disease Control (CDC) on each case and contacts to the case are identified and contacted.

Immunization

- Pertussis is part of the routine immunization schedule (DTaP-Polio-Hib/DTaP-Polio) for all children ages 2, 4, 6, 18 months and 4-6 years. A booster dose (Tdap) is given in grade 8.
- Tetanus, diphtheria & pertussis (Tdap) immunization is recommended as a onetime dose for all adults. And strongly encouraged for all caregivers of infants under 1 years of age because infants who are too young to be fully vaccinated are the most vulnerable to severe, sometimes fatal, cases of pertussis.

If you suspect pertussis

Disease Reporting Requirements: Test and report to CDC at 306-655-4612.

Treatment and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Recommendations: Azithromycin, Erythromycin, or Clarithromycin, are the antibiotics that are effective for pertussis treatment and chemoprophylaxis. If there are infants under one or a pregnant woman in the household of a contact to confirmed pertussis disease, then consider chemoprophylaxis. Guidelines are in the Saskatchewan Communicable Disease Control Manual @ <http://www.ehealthsask.ca/services/manuals/Pages/CDCManual.aspx>.

Exclusion Guidelines: People suspected of having pertussis should be told to stay away from infants under 1 and pregnant women in their last trimester. Persons with pertussis are excluded from certain settings (e.g. school, daycare or work) where there may be an infant under 1 or a pregnant woman in her last trimester; or if they are a healthcare worker until they have completed five days of antibiotic therapy. These exclusions are mandated by the Public Health Act (1998) of Saskatchewan.

Sincerely,

Original signed

Dr. Michael Schwandt
MD MPH CCFP FRCPC
Deputy Medical Health Officer