



Re: Exposure to Pertussis
To: Parents/Legal Guardians

We are writing to inform you that a case of pertussis (whooping cough) has been identified in an individual in The Cardinal Preschool at St. Joseph Catholic School. Your child may have been exposed to the ill person if they attend this school.

Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by coughing. Pertussis usually begins with cold-like symptoms and a cough that worsens over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms may include coughing "fits" followed by a "whooping" noise, vomiting, cyanosis (turning blue) or the inability to catch one's breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help eliminate the cough. Usually, persons infected with pertussis do not have a fever. In older children and adults the symptoms may be only a persistent cough which is worse at night. This illness is often very severe in small infants.

We recommend the following for children and staff that may have been exposed to pertussis:

- Please monitor your child for the next 3 weeks for cold-like symptoms.
- Symptoms of pertussis usually appear within 7-10 days of exposure, but can be as long as 3 weeks before symptoms begin.
- If your child develops cough, fever or other signs of respiratory illness s/he should be evaluated promptly by your doctor for pertussis infection.
- If you have a child under the age of 1 year who was potentially exposed please speak with your doctor about getting antibiotics for your child even if your child does not have any symptoms. This is done to prevent an exposed infant from developing the illness. These antibiotics must be taken as soon as possible after exposure.
- If you are pregnant, especially if in your third trimester, and were potentially exposed, please speak with your doctor about getting antibiotics for yourself to prevent the development of illness even if you do not have any of the above symptoms. These antibiotics must be taken as soon as possible after exposure.
- If you see your doctor for any of the reasons listed above, please show them this letter at your visit.

Although adults and children may contract pertussis, even if they have had all or some of their immunizations (DTaP and Tdap), vaccination against pertussis is still one of the best ways of reducing the risk of getting this disease and reducing the severity of disease. Pertussis vaccines are recommended for both children and adults. Adults and adolescents should have a Tdap booster shot. Clark County Public Health encourages parents to take this opportunity to ensure their families are up-to-date with vaccinations that protect against pertussis and other preventable diseases, regardless of a potential exposure. If you have any questions, please feel free to call St. Joseph School at 360-696-2586.