



## ALAMANCE COUNTY

### Health Department

319 North Graham-Hopedale Road Suite B  
Burlington, NC 27217-2995  
[www.alamance-nc.com/d/health](http://www.alamance-nc.com/d/health)

**Joseph B. Bass, Jr., MSW**  
Health Director

(336) 227-0101  
FAX (336) 513-5593

July 16, 2012

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have been exposed to pertussis (whooping cough). Since December 14, 2011 the Alamance County Health Department has seen an increasing number of pertussis cases in our county. Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory disease. Pertussis is spread by coughing or sneezing and its severe cough can last for weeks, sometimes leading to coughing fits. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be very dangerous for infants and people with weakened immune systems.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1.) If your child has a cough:
  - Please take your child to his/her primary care doctor and inform them that your child may have been exposed to pertussis (and please show him/her this letter.)
  - Keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports, dances, family events and play groups. Your child can return to school and any other extracurricular activities if your doctor tells you that your child does not have pertussis, or after your child has completed the five day course of antibiotics for pertussis.
  - Notify the Alamance County Health Department and your child's school if your child has been diagnosed with pertussis.
- 2.) If any of the following apply to you, please contact the health department so that your child can receive antibiotics to prevent pertussis:
  - If your child has a weakened immune system or a chronic lung disease such as cystic fibrosis
  - If your child lives with anyone with a weakened immune system or a chronic lung disease such as cystic fibrosis
  - If your child lives with a woman who is more than 20 weeks pregnant
  - If your child lives with an infant less than 12 months old

Please make sure your child and other family members are up to date on their immunizations. DTaP is a childhood vaccination against pertussis, but this protection decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women (after 20 weeks of pregnancy), should get a pertussis booster shot called "Tdap" to protect themselves and infants near or around them. Tdap has only been available since 2005, so many people have not received this booster shot. Tdap is required for children entering the sixth grade and is highly recommended for pregnant women and adults.

Tdap vaccine is available at no cost at the Alamance County Health Department. Hours of operation are Monday-Friday between the hours of 8 am-11 am and 1 pm-4 pm.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Communicable Disease line at the Alamance County Health Department at 336-516-7715.



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Dear Alamance County Providers:

Your patient may have been exposed to pertussis.

As the Alamance County Health Department (ACHD) continues to do active surveillance and identify new cases, we, along with the NC Division of Public Health, have developed the following guidelines for assessing and treating Alamance County patients.

**For patients in whom you suspect pertussis, please contact us by fax (570-6456) or telephone (516-7715) within 24 hours**, as required by NC law. ACHD can assist with questions regarding testing and treatment and with prescribing prophylaxis to household members and implementing other measures to prevent spread.

If your patient has paroxysmal cough, whoop or posttussive emesis please:

- 1.) Contact us by fax (570-6456) or telephone (516-7715).
- 2.) Treat with antibiotics appropriate for pertussis, unless you have made a different well-supported clinical or laboratory diagnosis.
- 3.) If treating for pertussis, exclude from school or the workplace for five (5) days starting from the initiation of antibiotics

All clinical decisions related to pertussis should be documented and communicated to the school with the student's return date. This includes cases where pertussis has been ruled out and the child can return to school.

Please administer an age appropriate pertussis containing vaccine ([www.cdc.gov/pertussis](http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis)) to individuals who have not been previously vaccinated, or refer to the Alamance County Health Department for vaccination.

Additional clinical and laboratory guidance may be found CDC website:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/clinical/diagnostic-testing/index.html>

Should you have any questions or concerns, please call the Communicable Disease nurse at the Alamance County Health Department at 336-516-7715.