

Metropolitan Area Pertussis Surveillance

January 5, 2017

Dear Centennial High School Community,

A case of whooping cough (also known as pertussis) has been confirmed at your school.

What is whooping cough? Whooping cough is an infection that causes severe coughing. It spreads easily in groups. Infants and young children can become very ill with this infection, but anyone, young or old, can become ill. Most people get a shot to prevent whooping cough, but protection wears off over time.

Symptoms: The illness usually begins with cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose or an irritating cough. The cough can become severe, with violent episodes of coughing, and can last for weeks to months. Sometimes there can be a “whooping” sound in young children, and some people vomit after coughing. Usually, there is no fever.

Recommendations:

For everyone:

- Make sure your family members are up to date on immunizations including whooping cough

For anyone with cold symptoms and a worsening cough of at least a week:

- Do not go to school, work and other activities until seen by a healthcare provider.
- Avoid contact with children under 1 year of age and pregnant women.
- Call your healthcare provider. Please let the provider know about the exposure to whooping cough by mentioning this letter.

For more information see: <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis>

If you or your child has symptoms, or you have other questions or concerns, please call the Metropolitan Area Pertussis Surveillance program at 503-988-8816.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH
Deputy Health Officer
Multnomah County Health Department