State of Montana *Health Alert Network*

DPHHS HAN ADVISORY

MONTANA
Department of Public Health & Human Services

Cover Sheet

DATE: November 3, 2011

SUBJECT: Pertussis Press Release

INSTRUCTIONS:
REDISTRIBUTE AT YOUR DISCRETION. Share this information with relevant SMEs or contacts (internal and external) as you see fit. **Remove this cover sheet before redistributing and replace it with your own.**

Note:

- For issues regarding reporting, laboratory and investigation of pertussis cases contact the DPHHS EPI Section at (406) 444 – 0273. You will be referred to the appropriate staff member.
- For information on Pertussis vaccination contact the DPHHS Immunization Section at (406) 444 – 5580.

For LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT reference only

DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for more information regarding this HAN, contact

(See Instructions)

DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:
1-800-701-5769

DPHHS HAN Website:
www.han.mt.gov

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Categories of Health Alert Messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Please call DPHHS to update contact information at 444-0919

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Talking Points Regarding Recent Pertussis Activity- DPHHS, November 3rd, 2011

<u>Situation Update:</u> A pertussis Outbreak is ongoing in Gallatin County. As of Wednesday November 3nd, there have been 24 confirmed cases of pertussis in the County within the last two weeks. With exception of one preschooler, all Gallatin cases have been among teens. Two additional cases have been identified in Park County siblings but there is no known connection at this time to the Gallatin outbreak.

The attached press release is scheduled to go out today. We wanted to provide you with advance notice. The attached "key questions" piece should help with any media or other questions. These links should provide you with the ability to drill down to any detail you might need.

<u>Inter-Jurisdictional Issues:</u> DPHHS will contact local health departments immediately upon becoming aware of cases or contacts in your area. Gallatin County will contact us with out of jurisdiction contacts or cases and we will immediately contact your jurisdiction if it is affected. DPHHS is requesting that local health agencies contact our office to coordinate any cross jurisdictional issues. This will enable us to "stay in loop" and offer assistance/information as needed.

<u>Bozeman Events/Travel:</u> Gallatin County Public Health is aggressively isolating symptomatic individuals and encouraging prophylaxis of close contacts while working closely with their school systems. Health Care Providers need to be alert for symptomatic individuals, but there should not be an overreaction by the public at large. There is a very low probability of spread in most interactions. At this time there is no reason to restrict travel to or events held in Gallatin County. The 23 of the 24 cases identified have been identified in a high school population of over 1800. Everything is being done to prevent ill individuals from exposing others.

How to Stay Informed: The CDEpi Weekly update each Monday will provide updates on numbers of cases and any changes in the situation. HAN messages will be provided IF any significant change occurs such as a spread to other jurisdictions.

Recommended actions:

- **Be alert for cases of pertussis. Communicate the need for Providers to also be alert.**
  - **Anyone with a cough characteristic of pertussis with an inspiratory whoop and/or post-cough vomiting or breathlessness, should be tested for pertussis.**
- **Treat cases and prophylaxis close contacts <u>regardless of immunization status.</u>**
- **Encourage a review and ensure everyone is up to date on immunizations and taking advantage of Tdap.**
- **Remind staff to have patients mask if coughing is a symptom.**
- **Support your staff in obtaining a Tdap vaccine to decrease the risk of pertussis in the workplace.**

Vaccination Related Information:

- **Everyone should make sure they are up to date with recommended pertussis vaccines (DTaP for infants/children and Tdap for adolescents/adults).**
    A. **No serious reactions have been associated with DTaP or Tdap and getting these vaccines is much safer than getting the dangerous kinds of diseases they prevent.**

- **Infants and children are recommended to receive the childhood pertussis vaccine, or DTaP, at 2, 4, and 6 months of age. A fourth shot is given between 15 and 18 months of age, and a fifth shot is given when a child enters school, at 4–6 years of age.**

    A. **To maximize protection, all 5 doses of DTaP are needed on time according to the recommended immunization schedule.**

- **Since 2005, there has been an adolescent/adult pertussis booster vaccine (Tdap) that can be used for prevention and control of pertussis.**

    A. **The protection received from DTaP, the childhood vaccine, fades over time. Adolescents and adults need Tdap, even if they were completely vaccinated with DTaP as children.**

    B. **Pre-teens going to the doctor for their regular check-up at age 11 or 12 years should get a dose of Tdap.**

    C. **Adults 19-64 years old who didn't get Tdap as a pre-teen or teen should get one dose of Tdap instead of their next Td booster.**

    D. **Adults 65 years and older (grandparents, childcare providers, and healthcare providers) who have close contact with infants should get a dose of Tdap, following the newest vaccine recommendations.**

    E. **The dose of Tdap can be given earlier than the 10-year mark since the last Td booster, so it's a good idea for adults to talk to a healthcare provider about what's best for their specific situation.**

    F. **Getting vaccinated with Tdap is especially important for family members and caregivers of new infants.**

- **If pertussis is circulating in the community, there is still a chance that a fully vaccinated person (of any age) can catch this very contagious disease. This is because no vaccine is 100% effective. However, when a vaccinated person gets pertussis, the infection is usually less severe.**

Efficacy of pertussis vaccines

How effective are pertussis immunizations?

-The formulations of DTaP currently available in the United States are estimated to be 80-85% effective. Tdap was licensed on the basis of a comparable immunologic response.

How soon after immunization with Tdap is an adult considered to be protected?

-One to two weeks, although Tdap immunization is not 100% effective.

Immunity following *B. pertussis* infection does not appear to be permanent. Pertussis disease, just like immunization, provides temporary immunity against catching pertussis in the future. Adolescents or adults who have a history of pertussis should still receive Tdap according to the routine recommendations because the duration of protection from pertussis disease is variable and because the diagnosis of pertussis can be difficult to confirm. Administering pertussis vaccines to persons with a history of pertussis presents no additional safety concerns.

NEWS

Department of Public Health and Human Services *www.dphhs.mt.gov*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 3, 2011
Contact: Jon Ebelt, Public Information Officer, DPHHS, (406) 444-0936
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Gallatin Pertussis Outbreak Emphasizes Need for Vaccinations

An outbreak of pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is occurring in Gallatin County. State, local and tribal public health agencies are encouraging Montanans to make sure they are up-to-date with pertussis vaccinations.

"The Gallatin public health staff is doing an excellent job working with schools and health care providers to prevent further spread of pertussis in the area", says Anna Whiting Sorrell, Director of the Department of Public Health & Human Services. "This is not an easy job but with the cooperation of parents, schools and health care providers we can stop this situation from becoming even worse".

So far in 2011, 101 cases of pertussis have been reported in Montana. The last 24 cases have been diagnosed in Gallatin County residents in the last two weeks. This is a public health threat that could spread beyond Gallatin County. At this time, 2 other cases have been reported in Park County but it is not certain that these are related to the Gallatin outbreak.

"All children over two months of age, parents, family members, and caregivers of infants, should be vaccinated against pertussis," said Lisa Underwood, Immunization Program Manager for the state health agency. "Persons who are not sure that they are fully immunized should talk with their healthcare provider or local health department".

Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is especially dangerous for infants. When not fully immunized, infants are especially vulnerable to infection and are at risk for hospitalization and death. A typical case of pertussis in children and adults starts with a cough and runny nose that lasts for one to two weeks, followed by weeks to months of rapid coughing fits that sometimes end with a "whooping" sound. Coughing can be severe with gagging and vomiting. Older children and adults may not exhibit the classic symptoms and can have a milder illness.

Vaccination is the best prevention against pertussis. Combination vaccines approved for children and adults also protect against Diphtheria and Tetanus. Pertussis vaccination begins at age two months, but young infants are not adequately protected until three shots are received by 6 months of age. Because protection from the vaccine can fade over time, a booster is recommended for pre-teens, teens, and adults.

Because pertussis outbreaks can spread rapidly, health agencies work quickly to investigate each pertussis case. Persons who have close contact with a pertussis case may be treated with antibiotics to prevent illness. Fully vaccinated children and adults are less likely to become ill. If illness occurs in those that are

fully vaccinated, the illness is generally milder. Montana's last reported death from pertussis was in a Gallatin county infant in 2004. A recent outbreak of pertussis in California resulted in 10 infant deaths.

To protect yourself and others, make sure you and your family members are vaccinated against pertussis. To get the pertussis vaccine, please contact your healthcare provider or local health department. Detailed information regarding pertussis and pertussis vaccinations is available online at http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/