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Mahomet-Seymour Schools

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

As we move toward Winter break, we continue to receive sporadic reports from C-U Public Health of confirmed cases of Pertussis (whooping cough) in our District. Although the contagion period for most of the cases has expired, or will expire within the next week, it is important that you remain aware of the signs and symptoms of Pertussis.

Please adhere to the following recommendations from the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District regarding suspect/ confirmed cases of Pertussis.

These are:

1. Confirmed cases of Pertussis must be excluded from school, daycare, or other social gatherings until at least 5 days after starting on antibiotic therapy.
2. Please consult with your physician if you are experiencing any Pertussis-like symptoms. Your doctor can diagnose the disease in a few days by ordering a PCR test.
3. Every child should have received the Pertussis vaccine at 2, 4, 6 and 15 months of age and another dose at 4 to 6 years of age. This vaccine is given in the same shot with diphtheria and tetanus vaccines. Immunization is required for child care and school attendance. A single dose of Tdap is recommended for people 11 through 64 for continued protection against Pertussis.

Symptoms of Pertussis usually appear 5-to 10-days after exposure, but can take as long as 21 days.

The first symptoms, which most of the cases in our district have presented with, are similar to those of a common cold - a runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever and a mild, occasional cough. The cough gradually becomes severe and, after one to two weeks, the patient has spasmodic bursts of numerous, rapid coughs. The characteristic high-pitched "whoop," which is more common in children, and comes from breathing in after a coughing episode. During such an attack, the patient may turn blue, vomit and become exhausted. Between coughing attacks, the patient usually appears normal. If you or someone you know has an unexplained cough lasting greater than two weeks accompanied by one of the symptoms listed above please refer them to a physician.

What you can do to help:

1. Remind your children of the importance of good hand washing and covering their coughs and sneezes with an arm or tissue.
2. Encourage your children to use hand sanitizer, which is available in every classroom.
3. If your child has a fever, please keep them home until the fever is gone for 24 hours.
4. If your child has a deep, hard cough for more than 14 days, have them seen by a physician.

If you have questions, you may contact Rachella Thompson, Communicable Disease Investigator by email at rthompson@c-uphd.org or by phone at (217) 531-5361.

Sincerely,

Nita Bachman, RN
Mahomet-Seymour District Nurse

“Committed to Excellence”