



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

May 3, 2019

Dear Parents,

A case of WHOOPING COUGH (also known as PERTUSSIS) was identified at Unity West Elementary School. Pertussis is a contagious, bacterial illness that is spread from person-to-person by droplet or direct contact with airborne respiratory secretions or by indirect contact with articles soiled by the infected person's nose and throat discharges.

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

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

These are:

1. 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 of 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.

I can be reached Monday through Friday 8-5pm at (217) 531-5361 or by email at [rthompson@c-uphd.org](mailto:rthompson@c-uphd.org) if you have questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Rachella Thompson  
Communicable Disease Investigator