

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



STEVE LEVY
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

JAMES L. TOMARKEN, MD
MSW, MPH, MBA, FRCPC, FACP
Commissioner

August 12, 2010

Dear Parent,

Several students at Nassakeag School were diagnosed with Pertussis. Pertussis, also known as “whooping cough” is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by cough. Children and adults may still develop pertussis even if they are up to date with their vaccinations as immunity to pertussis wanes over the years. Pertussis is particularly dangerous, even fatal, to infants who are not fully immunized.

There are 3 stages of pertussis infection:

Stage 1: Mild upper respiratory symptoms, low-grade fever, slight cough (mimics a cold, lasts 1-2 weeks, very infectious stage)

Stage 2: Spasmodic coughing episodes sometimes followed by long whooping sound (6 or more weeks), may also have vomiting after coughing episodes (continues to be infectious)

Stage 3: Although the infection is not contagious after appropriate antibiotic treatment, coughing episodes may persist for weeks to months, “cough of 100 days.”

The students were symptomatic with respiratory symptoms the end of June. One symptomatic student attended a summer program at Nassakeag from June 28th through July 28th. If your child has been exposed to pertussis, it may take up to three weeks for symptoms to develop. Incubation period is usually 7-10 days with a range of 5-21 days. Immunocompromised individuals may take longer to develop symptoms. If you observe these symptoms in your child, contact your pediatrician and request that your child be tested for pertussis with a special nasal-throat swab. This test can be performed at either the doctor’s office or hospital emergency room.

Early treatment with the appropriate antibiotic for the symptomatic student and his/her asymptomatic family (not currently showing symptoms), will eliminate disease transmission and may reduce disease severity in the child. The child will be restricted from school until he/she completes 5 days of the appropriate antibiotic.

A new combination Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Tdap) vaccine, for children over the age of ten and adults, is available which can provide protection against future exposures. For additional information on Pertussis, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov.

Parents or their physician may contact the Division of Disease Control at 631-853-3055 if they have any questions.

Sincerely,

Tina Fan, M.D., M.P.H.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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