



The mission of the Three Village Central School District, in concert with its families and community, is to provide an educational environment which will enable each student to achieve a high level of academic proficiency and to become a well-rounded individual who is an involved, responsible citizen.

THREE VILLAGE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Athletics

May 28, 2008

Re: Pertussis

This year there have been outbreaks of Pertussis (“whooping cough”) in several Suffolk County school districts. The following information is provided for your review. Children with signs and symptoms of respiratory infections should be evaluated by their physician for diagnosis and appropriate treatment where indicated.

Definition: Pertussis is a prolonged (greater than 14 days) bacterial infection of the upper respiratory tract characterized by episodes of intense coughing. Also known by its characteristic symptom, “Whooping Cough”. Anyone can get Pertussis but it is more common in infants and children. It is especially dangerous in infants less than 6 months old. It is spread by direct contact of respiratory secretions.

Clinical Course: Pertussis has three stages.

- 1). First 1-2 weeks characterized by low grade fever (100.5 or less), runny nose, general malaise, resembling a common cold.
- 2). Weeks 2-4 cough changes, becoming more frequent and stronger followed by an inspiratory “whooping sound”, in 50% of patients. The coughing fits may be followed by vomiting due to the sheer strain of coughing. In the most extreme cases vomiting may lead to dehydration.
- 3). Weeks 5-8, coughing fits gradually diminish.

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Pertussis can be: - accompanied by pneumonia and other serious conditions.

- is highly contagious
- Pertussis vaccines are highly effective and strongly recommended to prevent this disease, saving many infant lives every year. The immunity lasts through childhood, the time of greatest exposure and risk.

Treatment: Antibiotic treatment with Erythromycin, Zithromax, or Bactrim shortens the length of the disease but does not always alter the outcome. Treatment is suggested for confirmed cases and close contacts. Close contacts are defined as anyone who comes into contact with the respiratory secretions. **Students who are confirmed positive for Pertussis are required to remain out of school during the five days of antibiotic therapy. Students who are suspected by their physician to have been a close contact to the confirmed case are required to remain out of school for the five day antibiotic treatment also.** By New York State Department of Health guidelines students are considered to be unable to spread the disease after 5 days of antibiotic therapy or 21 days from the onset of cough.

Severity: Most cases of Pertussis gradually disappear completely by the end of the second month. Infrequently serious respiratory compromise occurs, requiring hospitalization.

Conclusion: In view of the presence of confirmed cases of Pertussis in our district, students who develop symptoms of respiratory infection (cough with cold symptoms) should be evaluated by their physicians. Confirmation of active Pertussis requires a positive culture obtained from a nasal smear.

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