



**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS,
ER/URGENT CARE AND INFECTION CONTROL PRACTITIONERS (1/22/09)**

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 8413
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

Re: Whooping Cough in Clare County

Dear Healthcare Providers:

Today the Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) received information regarding two confirmed cases of pertussis in the Harrison Community Schools.

Pertussis is a triphasic illness. The first or catarrhal stage consists of an insidious onset of rhinorrhea, sneezing and low grade fever. The symptoms at this point are indistinguishable from the common cold. The second stage of pertussis is called the paroxysmal stage. This stage is characterized by fits of hard coughing with an associated whooping sound. The classical whoop is caused by the forced inhalation of air against a nearly closed epiglottis. The final stage of pertussis is the convalescent stage. The various stages last 1, 6, and 2-4 weeks respectively.

The course of the disease is most readily altered if treatment is started in the earlier stages. A person with pertussis is contagious for the first 4 – 6 weeks. Even if a person is well into a bout of whooping cough there is still an important reason to prescribe treatment. If a person is shedding *Bordetella pertussis* the antibiotics will help stop the spread of pertussis to others.

Household contacts of cases of pertussis should be covered with antibiotics. The drug of choice for adolescents and adults is a five day course of azithromycin. Infants and toddlers can be treated with erythromycin. It takes about five days to get rid of *B. pertussis* after starting antibiotics.

Asymptomatic infants and under-immunized children should be brought up-to-date with a pertussis containing vaccine. Adolescents and adults can receive the new pertussis containing vaccine. Please note, however, there have not been any studies to date that document the protective nature of the new adolescent/adult pertussis containing vaccines in the face of a community outbreak of pertussis.

Test specimens for pertussis should be taken from the naso-pharyngeal passage. These tests can be performed in your office.

Finally, please report all probable and confirmed cases of pertussis to the patient's county of residence. You can report cases by calling your local CMDHD branch office and asking to speak to a communicable disease nurse.

Arenac County: (989) 846-6541
Clare County: (989) 539-6731
Gladwin County: (989) 426-9431

Isabella County: (989) 773-5921
Osceola County: (231) 832-5532
Roscommon County: (989) 366-9166

Sincerely,

Robert Graham DO

Robert Graham, DO, MPH, FAAP
Medical Director, Central Michigan District Health Department