



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Windham County Experiencing Rise in Whooping Cough Cases



News Release: July 9, 2014

Media Contact:

Vermont Department of Health
Communication Office
802-863-7281

BURLINGTON – The Health Department has alerted health care providers in Windham County about a rise in the number of people with confirmed cases of whooping cough – a total of 11 during the month of June. Ten of the cases were among children ages 3 to 17, and one was an adult. Cases occurred as schools were closing or after they had closed for the summer. To date in July, there are five more suspected cases. All but one of the confirmed and suspected cases are from Brattleboro.



Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, is a highly contagious disease caused by a bacterial infection of the lungs. While fully immunized children can get whooping cough if it takes hold in a community, vaccination is the safest and most effective way to prevent serious illness. The symptoms of this illness are most severe in infants who are too young to be fully vaccinated. The last major outbreak in Vermont was in 2012, with more than 600 cases, including more than 20 infants, statewide.

“Anyone who has a persistent cough should be evaluated by his or her health care provider,” said Susan Schoenfeld, deputy state epidemiologist for infectious disease. “People with suspected or confirmed pertussis should stay away from others until five days of antibiotic therapy have been completed. We ask anyone with coughing illness to stay away from infants, and we recommend that pregnant women get vaccinated to pass some protection on to their newborn.”

The infection usually begins with mild upper respiratory symptoms and an irritating cough that gradually worsens to include spasms of coughing, possible whooping, short periods without breathing, or gagging or vomiting after coughing spells. Coughing usually lasts at least two weeks. Infants may have less typical symptoms, such as gagging or difficulty breathing.

Whooping cough vaccines are recommended for babies starting at 2 months old, children, adolescents and adults – especially pregnant women. The DTaP vaccine is for babies, starting at 2 months old, and children. Children who never got DTaP vaccine are at least eight times more likely to get whooping cough than children who got all five of the recommended doses before age 7.

The Tdap vaccine is for children age 11 and older, and for adults. Tdap vaccine is especially important for pregnant women to get during each pregnancy, ideally in the third trimester. The mother’s body creates protective antibodies and passes some of them to her baby before birth, giving the newborn some short-term protection until they can begin building their own immunity through childhood vaccinations.

For more information about pertussis, visit healthvermont.gov

Join us on [Facebook](#)
Follow us on [Twitter](#)

Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first
Health Care Provider Infectious Disease Reporting: 802-863-7240 or 800-640-4374
||| | [Web Browser](#)

