



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Health Department Reports Increase in Pertussis Cases

For Immediate Release: Aug. 9, 2012
Media Contact: Communication Office
Vermont Department of Health
802-863-7281

BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health has alerted health care providers statewide about an increase in the number of cases of pertussis, including 68 of the 201 confirmed cases this year reported from June 1 – Aug 8.

Three infants have been hospitalized with confirmed or probable pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, since June 1. No deaths have been reported.

Pertussis is most severe in infants. More than half of infants less than one year of age with pertussis require hospitalization. Many infants are infected by family members or caregivers.

“Anyone who has a persistent cough should be evaluated by his or her health care provider,” said Breena Holmes, MD, maternal and child health director for the Health Department. “People with suspected or confirmed pertussis should be kept out of school, work, and group activities until five days of antibiotic therapy have been completed.”

Whooping cough is highly contagious and caused by a bacterial infection of the lungs. 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.

While fully immunized children sometimes get pertussis, immunization remains the best protection.

The last widespread outbreak of pertussis in Vermont occurred in 1996 -1997. A total of 280 cases were identified in 1996, including 171 cases in school-aged children in 69 Vermont schools. In 1997, there were 283 cases.

Visit healthvermont.gov for health information, news, and updates, and join us on [Facebook](#) or 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](#)

