



**Oldham**  
COUNTY SCHOOLS

*Continuing the Tradition of Excellence*



**Oldham County Health Department**  
1786 Commerce Pkwy  
LaGrange, KY 40031

## **PERTUSSIS (WHOOPING COUGH)**

**August 24, 2016**

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to advise you that Oldham County has seen an increase in *Bordetella pertussis* (whooping cough) cases across the county. Pertussis is a respiratory infection that is easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Its severe cough can last for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits and/or vomiting.

Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be particularly dangerous for:

- A woman who is pregnant
- Newborn infants
- An infant less than 12 months old
- Anyone with pre-existing health conditions that could be aggravated or made worse if they develop pertussis and have a severe cough (for example, but not limited to persons with cystic fibrosis or other chronic lung diseases, moderate to severe medically treated asthma, severe heart disease, or a weakened immune system.)

If your child has displayed symptoms of a cough illness, keep your child home, and call your medical provider for an appointment.

Pertussis can be prevented by vaccinations. Please make sure your family's vaccinations are up-to-date. Protection against pertussis from the childhood vaccine, DTaP, decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, should get a pertussis booster shot called "Tdap" to protect themselves and infants near or around them. Parents are encouraged to seek pertussis vaccinations for themselves and for their children at the Local Health Department, their local medical provider, a local pharmacy, or other community sites where pertussis vaccine is available.

Pertussis illness can cause children to miss school for five days or longer, but it can be very dangerous for infants and people with pre-existing health conditions that could be aggravated or made worse if they develop pertussis and have a severe cough. Family members with a cough illness caused by pertussis, especially mothers and caregivers, can spread pertussis to newborn babies.

### **\*Notes to Physicians:**

1. In general, the test of choice is a nasopharyngeal PCR for *B. Pertussis*.
2. For pertussis treatment, macrolides are recommended: Azithromycin (qd x 5 days),  
Clarithromycin (bid x 7 days).

**\*\*If the physician has more questions regarding *B. Pertussis*, they may call the Oldham County Health Department at 502-222-3516\*\***

Sincerely,  
Meagan Hurst, MPH, CHES  
Epidemiologist  
Oldham County Health Department (502) 222-3516 ext. 136