

October 27, 2010

To: Parents/Guardians

From: Scott County Health Department

Re: Pertussis (Whooping Cough) in Scott County

During the past several months, there have been many cases of Pertussis (Whooping Cough) found in Scott County. Because of the large number of cases that have been reported, the Iowa Department of Public Health has declared an outbreak of Pertussis in Scott County. So, what do you need to know?

1. Pertussis is easily spread to others when someone who has it coughs germs into the air and other people breathe them in.
2. Pertussis starts like a cold: runny nose and irritating cough. The cough keeps getting worse and might even cause the person to vomit.
3. School age children and healthy adults who have Pertussis may not look very sick, but will still spread it to other people when they cough.
4. Pertussis can cause babies, people with weak immune systems and older people to get very sick or even die. We take Pertussis very seriously because we do not want anyone to die from it.
5. Your child will bring home a letter from the Scott County Health Department if they have had contact with a case of Pertussis at their school. You need to follow the directions on the letter and call your doctor.
6. Your child may be sent home without a letter if they have a severe cough. Your child will need to be seen by their physician and evaluated for pertussis before returning to school.
7. If your child has been exposed and is coughing, he/she will need to be on medicine and cannot return to school until the sixth (6) day after starting the medicine or it has been 21 days since the cough started. It does not matter if they have had a shot for Pertussis.
8. If your child is treated for pertussis they may still cough for several weeks. They are not contagious.
9. Your child needs to **stay at home** during all of the time they cannot go to school. Do not take them or let them go to places where other people are: practices, grocery store, church, library, etc.
10. If your child brings home a letter and does not have cough or other symptoms of a respiratory infection you still need to follow the directions on the letter and call your doctor. Your child needs to take medicine to avoid getting sick and spreading the infection. The doctor **should not** test your child and well children do not have to stay home.
11. It may be time for your child or you to have a booster shot (Tdap) for Pertussis to keep you healthy the next time. Ask your doctor.
12. Please call the Scott County Health Department at 563-326-8618 if you have questions. We want to help keep you and your family safe and healthy.