

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY HEALTH AGENCY



Public Health Department

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Dear Health Care Provider:

Large numbers of pertussis cases in San Luis Obispo County continue to be reported to the Public Health Department, with **88 confirmed cases** reported as of June 7th, and an additional **38 suspected or probable cases**. This represents a significant outbreak in our jurisdiction, with only 19 cases having been reported over the prior two years in SLO County. To date, one infant has been hospitalized, with no deaths in our County due to the current outbreak. Providers are encouraged to **“Think Pertussis”** when seeing patients who are coughing, and test accordingly. Information regarding testing, diagnosis and treatment can be found at www.slopublichealth.org, look under “Important Health Issues” for a link to Pertussis information.

Your vigilance in diagnosis and treatment is needed to bring this outbreak under control! Upon diagnosis of a case of pertussis, all close contacts should receive prophylaxis. In managing a pertussis outbreak, treatment is the same as prophylaxis, with 5 days of azithromycin (z-pack) serving as the first-line drug. In cases where a z-pack is not affordable to patients, a 10-day regimen of SMP-TMX may be used as appropriate therapy.

If suspicion of pertussis is high, it is recommended that the patient be tested (preferably by nasopharyngeal swab) and that early treatment be initiated, even before lab results are known.

Please immediately report all cases (clinically compatible and/or lab-confirmed) to the Public Health Department. Then actively seek to identify and provide prophylaxis for close contacts (e.g., household members, persons with history of more than one hour spent in near proximity to a confirmed case). Efforts to provide antibiotic prophylaxis for pertussis should focus on infants less than one year of age since serious complications and death are limited to this group. Prompt antibiotic prophylaxis is recommended for close contacts of confirmed, presumptive, and suspect cases that are:

- *Infants less than one year of age*
- *Pregnant women in the third trimester (since they will soon have contact with an infant)*
- *All household contacts of a case if there is an infant or a pregnant woman in the third trimester in the household, even if the infant in the household is the case*
- *All those attending or working in a childcare setting (i.e., same room) of a case if there is an infant or a pregnant woman in the third trimester in the setting*
- *Healthcare personnel who work with infants or pregnant/postpartum women*

Remember that pertussis is contagious for up to 5 weeks.

We recommend that you evaluate the vaccination status of your patients, and provide Tdap when appropriate. We also recommend that you vaccinate yourself and staff members with Tdap. If you do not carry this vaccine, the Public Health Department has the booster for persons over 10 years of age, available for \$25.

In addition to the County's Public Health website, the California Department of Public Health has an excellent website with many resources at: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Pertussis.aspx>.

Thank you for your assistance in this important public health matter.

Penny Borenstein, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer