



County of San Luis Obispo • Public Health Department

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PUBLIC HEALTH MEDIA RELEASE

May 21, 2010

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Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Update – Cases Increasing

This week, San Luis Obispo County continues to see increased numbers of pertussis cases (otherwise known as Whooping Cough). On April 29th we reported the investigation of several cases. Since that report, the County's Public Health Laboratory has confirmed 32 cases and surveillance indicates clinical cases in many additional individuals. One infant is currently hospitalized in a pediatric ICU out of the county.

Symptoms of pertussis include a cough lasting longer than two weeks, increasing in severity and episodes of sudden, severe coughing and vomiting after coughing. Infants who are ill may become pale or dusky blue during a coughing episode and may stop breathing for a short period of time. Possible complications include pneumonia, seizures, sepsis and encephalopathy.

“Pertussis is highly contagious and can be fatal for young infants,” reports Health Officer Penny Borenstein. “Anyone with these symptoms should seek medical attention immediately.” Also people in close contact with persons diagnosed with pertussis should contact their medical provider regarding the necessity of preventive medication.

Treatment includes antibiotics and rest for most – for infants, hospitalization can be necessary. Untreated, infected persons remain infectious for several weeks. Symptoms can last three months or longer.

Vaccination is the best prevention for pertussis. The Public Health Department therefore recommends pertussis-containing immunization (Tdap) for anyone 10-64 years of age who has not received a dose since early childhood. Vaccination is especially important for anyone who may have close contact with infants and small children.

Pertussis vaccine is available at all San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department sites by appointment for \$25.

For more information about pertussis and local updates, please go to: <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/PA.htm> and click on “pertussis (whooping cough)” or call our Public Health Information Line at 805-788-2903.

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