



FERRY COUNTY – Republic, WA | PHONE: 509-775-3111
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STEVENS COUNTY – Colville, WA | PHONE: 509-684-2262

November 6, 2024

Potential Exposure to Pertussis

Dear Staff, Student, or Parent/Legal Guardian,

Over the last month there has been an increase in pertussis (whooping cough) cases through the Newport School District. Because the cases are district-wide, there is a chance of extensive exposure to the illness for students/staff. Continued transmission in the school district, meeting the definition of an outbreak, will result in exclusion of students/staff who do not meet the definition of immunity. The exclusion duration is 21 days from the last confirmed case(s) in the school district.

Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial infection that is spread between people through the air when an infected individual coughs or sneezes. Pertussis usually begins with cold-like symptoms or a cough that worsens over 1-2 weeks. The hallmark symptoms of pertussis include coughing “fits” followed by a “whooping” noise, vomiting, cyanosis (turning blue), or the inability to catch one’s breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help eliminate the cough. Usually, people infected with pertussis do not have a fever. In older children and adults, the symptoms may only be a persistent cough. If untreated, an infected individual can be contagious for several weeks. **Pertussis can affect people of all ages and can be very serious, even deadly, for infants less than a year old.**

Northeast Tri County Health District recommends the following for anyone who may have been exposed to pertussis:

- Ensure your/your child’s immunizations are up to date. Although vaccinated individuals may still contract pertussis, **vaccination is the best way of preventing pertussis and can reduce the severity of disease in infected persons.** In addition to routine childhood immunizations, a pertussis vaccine booster may also be recommended for some adolescents and adults.
- Monitor yourself/your child for signs of pertussis. If symptoms of a respiratory illness develop, it is important to be evaluated promptly for potential infection.
- If you are pregnant and were potentially exposed, speak with your doctor about antibiotics even if you don’t have any symptoms. When taken promptly following

exposure, these antibiotics may prevent the development of pertussis illness or decrease its severity.

- If you see your doctor for any of the reasons listed above, please show this letter to your doctor during your visit.

Students and staff who test positive for whooping cough, or have a known exposure and have consistent symptoms should stay home until they have completed five days of appropriate antibiotics or until 21 days after cough onset if antibiotics are not taken.

If you have any questions, please call Northeast Tri County Health District at (509) 684-2262 option 1.