



Hardin County Health Services

Sharon Whitley, *Director*

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Jana Winberg, MD, *Health Authority*

December 17, 2024

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that a student who attends **Silsbee Elementary School** with your child has been diagnosed with whooping cough (also called pertussis). Whooping cough is an infection that affects the airways. The bacteria that causes whooping cough can easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Whooping cough can cause a severe cough that lasts for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits or vomiting. Coughing fits can include not being able to catch their breath between coughs and result in a loud gasp ("whoop"), vomit or choking. Anyone can get whooping cough, but it can be very dangerous for babies and people with certain health conditions that may be worse with whooping cough.

Recommendations:

1. Please make sure your family's whooping cough vaccinations are up to date
 - o The vaccine usually protects against whooping cough. But younger children who have not completed their 5-dose vaccination series and older children, teenagers and adults who were completely immunized before they started kindergarten can get whooping cough because protection from the vaccine wears off over time.
 - o This is why a booster dose of vaccine, called Tdap, is recommended for those 11-18 years of age and for adults.
2. If your child has a cough:
 - o Keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports or play groups.
 - o Make an appointment with your child's doctor as soon as possible and tell the doctor that your child may have been exposed to whooping cough.
3. If your child has a health condition that may be worse with whooping cough, such as asthma, ask your child's doctor to prescribe antibiotics to your child as soon as possible to prevent whooping cough. Doctors should give antibiotics to a child with certain health conditions if they may have been exposed to whooping cough, even if he or she is not coughing. If your child lives with any of the following people, ask your child's doctor to prescribe antibiotics as soon as possible to your child, even if he or she is not coughing:
 - o A woman who is pregnant, a baby younger than 12 months old or anyone with health conditions that may be worse with whooping cough, such as asthma.
4. If your child has or has not been diagnosed with whooping cough by their doctor, ask for a doctor's note with the correct diagnosis to give to your child's school.
 - o If diagnosed with pertussis, your child will need to stay home from daycare until five days of antibiotics have been completed.

Hardin County Health Services will continue to investigate the situation.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Whitney Heinicke".

Whitney Heinicke, Epidemiology Manager

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chinedum Iluno".

Chinedum Iluno, Epidemiologist

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