



Scarborough Public Schools

December 1, 2025

Message to all Scarborough Public School Families

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Dear Families,

Earlier today, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) confirmed a handful of cases of pertussis (whooping cough) at Scarborough High School. Students and staff at Scarborough High School may have been exposed. We are sending this out districtwide today, as we know that many families have siblings at other schools within the district.



Pertussis is an infection caused by bacteria. It affects the airways and spreads easily from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Pertussis usually begins with symptoms of a common cold (sore throat, runny nose, mild cough), and often develops into a severe cough. The severe cough leads to coughing fits and/or vomiting. The cough is often worse at night. Early symptoms can last 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually begin 5-10 days after exposure but can take up to 3 weeks. People infected with pertussis are most contagious for 2 weeks after the cough begins.

Anyone can get pertussis, including people who have had pertussis vaccine. Pertussis can cause serious and sometimes deadly complications for babies, especially those who have not received

all recommended pertussis vaccines.

What you should do:

1. If your child has a severe cough (including uncontrollable coughing fits, coughing to the point of gagging, vomiting after coughing, or difficulty breathing):

- Make an appointment with a health care provider. Tell them about the possible exposure so they can test for pertussis.
- Keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports or play groups, until you receive test results.

2. If a health care provider diagnosed your child with pertussis:

- Keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports or play groups, until your child has completed 5 days of antibiotic treatment.
- All household and high-risk close contacts (including infants younger than 12 months, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems) should be treated with antibiotics to prevent pertussis infection.
 - Anyone with symptoms of pertussis infection should stay home until they complete antibiotic treatment. Those without symptoms do not need to stay home while completing treatment.

3. If your child does not have symptoms, they do not need to be tested or excluded from activities. However, you should monitor your child for symptoms and seek care if they become sick with the symptoms described above.

4. Encourage your child to practice good hygiene to prevent the spread of disease:

- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.

Please make sure your family's vaccinations are up to date. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, should get a pertussis booster shot called "Tdap" to help protect themselves and babies around them. Contact a health care provider to schedule a vaccination appointment or call the Maine Immunization Program at 1-800-867-4775 to find a vaccine provider near you.

You can find more information about pertussis at <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/diseases-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-virus/pertussis>. If you have any questions or concerns, please call your school and ask to speak with the nurse, or call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.

Sincerely,

Diane Nadeau, Ph.D.
Superintendent

This picture will take you to the Maine CDC website

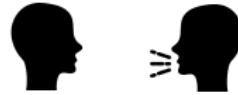
Click below

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Fact Sheet



Pertussis, or whooping cough, is caused by bacteria. People of all ages can get pertussis.



Pertussis spreads from person-to-person through the air, usually by coughing or sneezing. A person has to breathe in droplets from an infected person to get sick.

Signs and Symptoms



Runny Nose



Cough



Vomiting or Gagging After Coughing



Exhaustion

The first signs of pertussis are similar to a common cold and include runny nose, low or no fever, and a mild cough. After one or two weeks of illness, the cough changes and is often sudden and uncontrollable where one cough follows the next without a break or breath. A high-pitched whooping sound when breathing in after a coughing episode can occur.

Pertussis can be treated with antibiotics and is most effective if started early. Cough may continue for many weeks after treatment, especially if treatment is started late in the illness.

Prevention



Wash Your Hands Often



Cover Coughs With Your Sleeve or a Tissue



Stay Home When Sick



Get Vaccinated (DTaP for children, Tdap for adults)

For More Information, Visit:



1. www.maine.gov/dhhs/pertussis
2. www.cdc.gov/pertussis

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.

Updated April 2023

Icons from www.flaticon.com



Scarborough Schools

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