



CORPUS CHRISTI—NUECES COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT



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Corpus Christi, Texas

OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

(361) 851-7251 After- Hours 24/7 No. 361-887-5559

Date: July 31, 2009

Dear Physicians:

The Corpus Christi-Nueces County Public Health District Communicable Disease Division has noted an increase in the number of confirmed cases of Pertussis (whooping cough) over the last few months. The confirmed cases recently involve newborns. Another age group from the confirmed cases is 9-12 year olds. We know routine vaccinations begin for the newborns at age two months. In conducting investigations of the confirmed cases, the index case seems to be the adult age group. One or two cases have been the mother to the child or baby. As you are aware, Pertussis is spread through the air when infected people cough. Exposure of six or more hours at a distance of less than six feet can lead to transmission.

Pertussis symptoms have two stages. The first stage resembles a cold with a runny nose, sneezing and cough. The cough lasts a week or two, and then slowly gets worse. The second stage is marked by uncontrolled coughing spells and a whooping noise when the patient inhales. During severe coughing spells, a person may vomit or become cyanotic from lack of air. Between coughing spells, the person often appears well. This stage lasts four to six weeks. In adolescents and adults, pertussis often presents like chronic bronchitis.

Antibiotic therapy early in the course of the disease may decrease severity of symptoms. After five days of antibiotics for pertussis, children and adults may safely return to school and the workplace. The patient will not transmit the disease if the 14 day course of antibiotic treatment is continued and completed.

We are asking the medical community to be aware of the increase in cases and suggest the use of the Tdap vaccine for booster doses when tetanus is needed. The safety of pertussis vaccine (Tdap) in pregnancy has not been determined, therefore vaccination *is not recommended* during pregnancy. It is suggested, however, that any postpartum mother who has not had a tetanus booster in the last ten years be given Tdap immediately postpartum (ACIP recommendations May 2008). If you need additional information regarding Pertussis, please contact the Corpus Christi-Nueces County Public Health Communicable Disease Division @ 826-7251. Please remember Pertussis is a reportable disease to the local health department. Thank you for your commitment to the health of our community.

Sincerely,

Linda Simmons, RN BSN
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