



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY RECOMMENDS NEW PERTUSSIS VACCINE FOR ADULTS, YOUTH

Continued Rise in Cases Nationwide and Locally Warrants Concern; Infants Especially at Risk

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) Public Health Services continues to warn local physicians and the public about the rise in pertussis throughout the county and nation, and recommends immunizations for adolescents and adults.

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, can be passed on to infants by their adult and adolescent household contacts, said Nancy Bowen, M.D., San Diego County Public Health Officer.

“Pertussis is highly contagious, and infants are at the highest risk for complications from this respiratory disease,” she said. “Even if you got a pertussis vaccination when you were a child, immunity wears off.”

Two newly-approved vaccines offer hope of interrupting the spread of pertussis from adolescents and adults to infants. One vaccine is licensed for use in adolescents, while the other is licensed for use in adolescents and adults. Public Health Services recommends pertussis vaccinations for adolescents ages 11 – 18 years of age, and in adults 19 – 64 years of age.

Symptoms in adults can include a cough that lasts two weeks, with coughing fits, the “whoop” sound upon inhalation that signifies pertussis, and vomiting following severe coughing. Complications can include rib fractures resulting from severe cough, and pneumonia requiring hospitalization.

Infants can develop secondary bacterial pneumonia, the most common cause of pertussis-related deaths.

For more information about pertussis and immunization in general, please call the County HHS Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661, or visit the website at www.immunization-sd.org.

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