



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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**CONTACT:** Yvette Urrea Moe (619) 595-4632

## **PERTUSSIS EPIDEMIC REMAINS A THREAT TO THE COMMUNITY** *Children and Staff Potentially Exposed to Disease at Three Schools*

The number of confirmed pertussis cases in the region for 2011 jumped to 34, including three new cases where students attended schools, potentially exposing others to whooping cough, the County's Health and Human Services Agency reported today. Please see below for case detail.

The month is not over and already the total number of cases is nearly six times the total for January in 2010 when 6 cases were reported. In 2010, pertussis cases reached a record-high of 1,140 which included two infant deaths from pertussis.

"Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial respiratory disease that affects all ages, but is often spread at schools where children interact closely with one another. We continue to recommend that children get their regular immunizations and a booster shot at the appropriate times," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. "It is equally important that household contacts of young children are also vaccinated, as research shows that 80 percent of children with pertussis are infected by a family member or caregiver. That's why it is vital that adults and adolescent siblings obtain the one-time Tdap vaccine."

The California Department of Public Health recommends a pertussis booster vaccine (Tdap) for everyone 10 years or older who has not yet received it, especially women of childbearing age, before, during, or immediately after pregnancy; and other people, including household contacts, caregivers, and health care workers, who have contact with pregnant women or infants. Children 7-9 years of age who did not receive all of their routine childhood shots are recommended to receive a Tdap booster dose.

Additionally, beginning July 1, all students entering 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades in both public and private schools must show proof that they have had a Tdap booster shot before they can start school. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that children receive a booster shot of Tdap vaccine at 11-12 yrs.

The CDC also recommends that children get one dose of DTaP vaccine at the following ages: 2 months; 4 months; 6 months; 15 to 18 months and 4 to 6 years. The vaccine is available from a primary care physician. Residents who do not have health care coverage may visit a HHS Public Health Center.

A typical case of pertussis in children and adults starts with a cough and runny nose for one-to-two weeks, followed by weeks to months of rapid coughing fits that sometimes end with a whooping sound. Fever, if present, is usually mild. The disease is treatable with antibiotics.

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For more information about whooping cough, please call the HHSA Immunization Branch at (866) 358-2966, or visit the web site at [www.sdiz.org](http://www.sdiz.org).

The new pertussis cases that occurred this week are:

- An 8-year-old who was up-to-date on immunizations and attends School of the Madeleine in San Diego. Contact: Donna Wittouck (619) 276-6545.
- A 4-year-old who was up-to-date on immunizations and attends Village Church Nursery School in Rancho Santa Fe. Contact: Pam Miller (858) 356-2394 ext. 108.
- A 16-year-old who was due for a booster shot and attends Morse High School in the San Diego Unified School District. Contact: Linda Zintz (619) 725-5568.

Free pertussis vaccines for individuals who have contact with children under one year of age are available this weekend at local Northgate markets from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the following locations:

- 2909 Coronado Ave., San Diego, 92154
- 1410 S. 43<sup>rd</sup> St., San Diego, 92113
- 1058 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Chula Vista, 91911
- 606 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido, 92025
- 1150 E. Vista Way, Vista, 92084
- 1346 S. Mission Rd., Fallbrook, 92028

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