



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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SEVERAL CHILDREN DIAGNOSED WITH WHOOPING COUGH

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) is reporting ten local children have been diagnosed with pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough.

Five children were up-to-date on age-appropriate vaccinations:

- A 2-year-old who was attends Baldwin Academy;
- An 8-year-old who attends Explorer Elementary Charter School in the San Diego Unified School District;
- An 8-year-old who attends Hope Elementary School in the Carlsbad Unified School District;
- A 10-year-old who attends Hope Elementary School in the Carlsbad Unified School District; and
- A 10-year-old who attends Casita Center Elementary School in the Vista Unified School District.

Four additional children were due for booster shots:

- Three 11-year-olds who attend La Costa Meadows Elementary School in the San Marcos Unified School District; and
- A 12-year-old who attends Standley Middle School in the San Diego Unified School District.

One student, a 10-year-old who attends San Pasqual Union Elementary School in the San Pasqual Union School District, was unvaccinated.

HHS is working closely with the schools to notify staff and parents of all students who were potentially exposed.

“The County of San Diego and the state are seeing an increase in the number of pertussis cases this year,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. “Infants are especially vulnerable to complications from pertussis. Locally, seven children ages six months or younger have been hospitalized with pertussis, and there have been five deaths of young children in California this year attributed to the illness.

“It’s extremely important for parents to make sure their children have all age-appropriate vaccinations and for older children and adults, especially those in contact with young children, to get the important booster shot after turning 11,” Wooten added.

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No vaccine is 100 percent effective and immunity can wane over time, but being up-to-date on your vaccinations can lessen the severity of illness-related symptoms.

It is recommended that children get five doses of DTaP vaccine, one dose at 2 mo., 4 mo., 6 mo., 15-18 mo., and 4-6 years of age. It is also recommended that people 11- 64 years of age receive a one-time dose of Tdap, given in place of a "tetanus booster," which is administered every 10 years.

Named for the "whoop" sound children and adults sometimes make when they try to breathe in during or after a severe coughing spell, whooping cough usually starts with flu-like symptoms, such as runny nose, sneezing, fever and a mild cough. These symptoms may be mild and brief, or last up to two weeks, but are often followed by severe coughing fits that may be associated with vomiting. Fever, if present, is usually mild. It is treatable with antibiotics.

Whooping cough can occur at any age, but infants and young children are at highest risk of life-threatening complications, the most common of which is pneumonia. In adolescents and adults, rib fractures and difficulty sleeping may occur.

There have been 80 reported cases of whooping cough in San Diego County this year. There were 143 cases in 2009. Reports of whooping cough usually peak in the summer months.

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

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