



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

July 7, 2010

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## ELEVEN AREA CHILDREN DIAGNOSED WITH WHOOPING COUGH

Pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, continues to be on the increase in San Diego County. Eleven local children have been recently diagnosed, according to the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. These bring the total of whooping cough cases in 2010 to 124. Last year, there were 143 cases in the county.

The cases are:

- A 4-year-old who was *up-to-date* on vaccinations and attends Solana Beach Presbyterian Preschool and the Solana Beach Presbyterian Church KidsGames program. The last day of preschool was June 11 and the KidsGames program was held from June 21-25.
- A 7-year-old who was *unimmunized* and attends Ocean Beach Elementary School in the San Diego Unified School District. The last day of school was June 17.
- A 9-year-old who was *up-to-date* on vaccinations and attends Ira Harbison Elementary School in the National School District. The last day of school was June 17.
- A 9-year-old who was *unimmunized* and attends Franklin Elementary School in the San Diego Unified School District. The last day of school was June 21.
- A 10-year-old who was *unimmunized* and attends Dana Middle School in the San Diego Unified School District. The last day of school was June 21.
- Two 11-year-olds who were *due for Tdap booster shots* and attend Madison Middle School in the Vista Unified School District. The last day of school was June 17.
- An 11-year-old who was *due for a Tdap booster shot* and attends El Camino Creek Elementary School in the Encinitas Union School District. The last day of school was June 18.
- A 12-year-old who was *up-to-date* on vaccinations and attends Vista Magnet School in the Vista Unified School District. The last day of school was June 16.

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- A 13-year-old who was *due for a Tdap booster shot* and attends Vista Magnet School in the Vista Unified School District. The last day of school was June 16.
- A 15-year-old who was *up-to-date* on vaccinations and attends University City High School in the San Diego Unified School District. The last day of school was June. 21.

"Currently there is a statewide epidemic; typically a pertussis epidemic occurs every three to five years. The last epidemic in San Diego was in 2005," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County of San Diego Public Health Officer. "It is very important that both adolescents and adults -- especially those who take care of or have children in the home -- obtain the one-time Tdap booster to help decrease the spread of this vaccine-preventable disease. As some of the cases above demonstrated, even when vaccinated with the Tdap booster it is not 100 percent effective; however, in these few cases, the infection is usually mild."

HHSA is working closely with the schools and church to notify staff and parents of all students who were potentially exposed. Efforts to alert and provide further guidance to the local health care community are also being implemented.

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 currently 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. Again, 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. A possible expansion of the age recommendations is being considered at the state and federal level. As more information is available, HHSA will inform the community.

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.

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](http://www.sdiz.org).

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