



## South Central District Health

1020 Washington St N \* Twin Falls ID 83301

*Keeping your family & community healthy*

June 21, 2006

### **PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release**

Contact: Cheryl Becker, Epidemiologist, 737-5936

### **June Increase in Pertussis**

Increased reports of Pertussis (whooping cough) to South Central District Health (SCDH) during early June has created concern and triggered control measures. Nine confirmed cases of Pertussis have been reported since June 15 with one child hospitalized. Cases have been reported in Blaine, Cassia, Minidoka and Twin Falls Counties, with ages ranging from 1 month to 58 years. Prior to June, only one case of Pertussis had been reported in 2006.

SCDH considers Pertussis is a serious disease because it is frequently complicated by pneumonia and ear infections, especially in infants, although death is rare. Symptoms usually develop within 1-2 weeks after contact with a person with Pertussis. Early signs include a persistent cough that follows a cold. The cough usually occurs in explosive bursts ending with a typical high-pitched whoop as the person catches their breath, but can also cause vomiting. Between bursts of coughing, the person appears well, but the coughing attacks can continue for four to six weeks. Older children or adults may have less severe symptoms. People with a cough are contagious for 3 weeks if untreated, and for five days after treatment is begun.

Persons experiencing symptoms of Pertussis should consult their health care provider. Special tests may be done to confirm the diagnosis. Care should be taken to limit exposure to other people through good cough hygiene; cover the mouth when you cough and wash hands often. Antibiotics are used to treat the disease and also are given to known contacts of the person with Pertussis in an effort to control spread of the disease.

Many cases of Pertussis are linked to unrecognized adult cases of disease. Pertussis immunizations received during early childhood` do not provide lifetime protection, decreasing dramatically within five years of the last vaccination at kindergarten age. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends adults from 19 to 64 years of age and adolescents 11-18 years of age now be vaccinated with a newly licensed vaccine booster for tetanus, diphtheria and now including Pertussis (Tdap).

(more)

Under the ACIP recommendation, the Tdap vaccine would replace one dose of the currently recommended tetanus-diphtheria vaccine that is used as the adult or adolescent booster vaccine. The ACIP recommends adults receive a booster dose of Tdap vaccine against tetanus, diphtheria and Pertussis if they have not received a tetanus and diphtheria (Td) booster dose in ten or more years. If an individual has already been vaccinated with Td at intervals shorter than 10 years, they should check with their physician about the correct time to receive a dose of this vaccine.

The new vaccine helps protect adults from Pertussis and also reduces the risk of transmitting Pertussis to infants, those most at risk to develop serious or life-threatening complications.

Persons with questions regarding Pertussis can contact South Central District Health epidemiologists Cheryle Becker or Karin Frodin at 734-5900, or Lisa Klamm at 436-7185 or through any one of the SCDH offices in your county.

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