

December 14, 2018

PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

Whooping Cough outbreak in Blaine County School District

BLAINE COUNTY – South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) has confirmed several students in the Blaine County School District have been diagnosed with Pertussis (whooping cough).

“Pertussis is a very serious disease, especially for infants under the age of one,” said Tanis Maxwell, SCPHD Epidemiologist. “It’s important to watch for symptoms so you can get medicine right away and protect the rest of your family from the bacteria.”

Symptoms usually develop within one to two weeks after contact with a person with pertussis.

Symptoms:

Early signs include a persistent cough that follows a cold. The cough usually comes in explosive bursts ending with a high-pitched whoop as the person catches their breath. It 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 three weeks if untreated and for five days after treatment has begun.

How is it spread?

Pertussis is spread by contact with droplets in the air from coughing or sneezing. People in close contact with a case of pertussis (such as family members or close friends) are more likely to become ill.

What do I do if I am showing symptoms?

If you or your child develops a persistent cough, even if you have been immunized, please stay at home and consult your doctor for diagnosis and treatment. Children with symptoms of pertussis should not attend school until seen by a physician. Please call your local public health district office or your physician before taking a child in for testing. Special arrangements can be made to prevent spread to others at the time of testing.

How can I protect against Pertussis?

There is a vaccine to help protect against Pertussis. Children should receive Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP) vaccine beginning at two months of age. By the time of school entry, most children receive five doses of DTP vaccine. A single dose of a similar vaccine called TDaP is

recommended for people ages 11-64. Protection from the vaccine may decline throughout a person's life. Older children and adults may be able to develop the disease even if they have been vaccinated.

SCPHD has pertussis immunizations available for babies, adolescents, and adults. Immunizations are available by appointment at all SCPHD offices in:

Bellevue: 788-4335

Gooding: 934-4477

Jerome: 324-8838

Mini-Cassia: 678-8221

Twin Falls: 737-5966