



BIRDVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

MICHELLE PROVENCE, R.N., DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

We were notified by the health department that there has been a confirmed case of Pertussis (Whooping Cough) on our campus. It is caused by bacteria called *Bordetella pertussis* that live in the mouth, nose and throat.

Infants and children are immunized against Pertussis when they receive the series of DPT immunizations starting at two months old. Those most at risk to develop Pertussis after an exposure are infants under one year old, adolescents 11-18 years old, and adults. More than half of the infants who get the disease must be hospitalized. Older children and adults that get the disease have a much less severe case that might not even be recognized as Pertussis.

Pertussis is a very contagious disease, and is fairly common in the United States. It is spread by personal contact, coughing and sneezing.

Symptoms usually appear within 7-10 days after exposure. It first appears as a common cold, with sneezing, runny nose, fever and a mild cough. After one to two weeks, severe coughing spells begin accompanied by vomiting, possible weight loss, incontinence, rib fractures and passing out from coughing spells. The Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis) vaccine was licensed in 2005 and is recommended for adolescents and adults.

For information on the vaccine or Pertussis (Whooping Cough), please contact your family doctor.

Sincerely,
Michelle Provence, R.N.
Director of Health Services