

October 31, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

**RE: Notice of Pertussis (Whooping Cough) in Beaverlodge Regional High School**

Public Health staff are investigating a confirmed case of pertussis within your child's school. Pertussis is usually a mild illness in older children and adults, but can be more serious for young children and pregnant women in their final trimester.

Please observe your child for the following symptoms:

1. Persistent cough;
2. Spasms of coughing which have a characteristic "whoop", which may increase in frequency at night;
3. Coughing followed by vomiting.

If your child exhibits a cough as described above, or develops a cough within the next two weeks, please contact your local public health centre and have your child assessed by a doctor as soon as possible. Please give this letter to the doctor to confirm your child's exposure to the disease. Children diagnosed by the doctor as having pertussis may not return to school/daycare, and should avoid public gatherings, until they have taken the prescribed medication for 5 days. They must continue taking the medicine until it is finished.

The above recommendations are meant to reduce the spread of the disease and thus protect babies and under-immunized young children in whom the disease can be very serious.

Pertussis is a vaccine-preventable disease, and the pertussis vaccine is part of the routine childhood immunization series in Alberta. Most children get the vaccine as part of their regular immunizations at 2, 4, 6, and 18 months, plus preschool and grade 9 doses. It is unusual, but still possible, for an individual who has received the pertussis vaccine to develop pertussis.

**If you or your children have not been completely immunized against pertussis, we recommend vaccination as soon as possible. Contact your local Public Health Office for vaccination history and/or to make an appointment.**

For further information regarding Pertussis, please call Health Link at 811, and/or view: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=hw65653>

Sincerely,

***Original Signed***

Dr. Albert S. de Villiers, MB.Ch.B., M.Med. (C.H.)  
Medical Officer of Health, North Zone-West (Areas 1, 2, 3, 9)