

Amador County Public Health Department



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April 25, 2009

PERTUSSIS (WHOOPING COUGH)

WHAT IS IT? Whooping Cough (Pertussis) is a highly contagious, bacterial infection of the respiratory system marked by severe coughing.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Begins with cold-like signs and symptoms such as runny nose, sneezing and cough
- Cough may progress to severe coughing which may cause vomiting or difficulty catching a breath
- Fever is usually absent or minimal

HOW IS IT SPREAD? Whooping Cough is caused by bacteria that is found in the mouth, nose and throat of an infected person, and is spread through close contact with an infected person when they talk, sneeze, or cough.

WHEN IS IT CONTAGIOUS? Whooping Cough is contagious during the first 2 to 3 weeks of the infection, often before the severe coughing begins.

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED? You need to see your health care provider for diagnosis and treatment which may include antibiotics.

HOW IS IT PREVENTED? Whooping cough is a vaccine-preventable disease. Immunizations required for school entry include DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus). Vaccine protection does not last forever and decreases over time, typically by adolescence. There is a vaccine that was approved in 2005 called Tdap which is available for teens and adults. Contact your health care provider regarding your family's immunization status and recommendations.

As with many illnesses hand washing and covering your cough is the best way to prevent infection.

SHOULD INFECTED STUDENTS STAY HOME? Yes, if Whooping Cough is confirmed the student needs to be excluded from school for a period of time determined by their health care provider. Close contacts who are coughing should receive medical evaluation and treatment.

For additional information, consult your Healthcare provider or the Amador County Public Health Department at 223-6407.

The following information was developed as a collaborative effort between the Amador County Unified School District and the Amador County Public Health Department in an effort to insure the highest level of health for families in Amador County.