



SAN BENITO COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Health Advisory

Three cases of Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Confirmed in San Benito County

Public Health Services Urges Residents to Get Vaccinated Against Pertussis

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
CONTACT:

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Sam Perez, Public Information Officer

San Benito County Public Health Services confirms three cases of Pertussis (also known as whooping cough) this fall and more cases are predicted. Health officials urge residents to get vaccinated to prevent the spread of this highly contagious bacterial disease.

The symptoms of whooping cough vary by age. For children, whooping cough typically starts with a runny nose and cough for one to two weeks. The cough then worsens and often results in rapid coughing spells that end with a whooping sound. Young infants may not have typical whooping cough symptoms and may have no apparent cough. Parents may describe episodes in which breathing briefly stops and the infant's face turns red or purple. For adults, whooping cough may be a cough illness that lasts for several weeks.

Infants too young for vaccination are at greatest risk for life-threatening cases of pertussis. Each year, 50–200 California infants are hospitalized with pertussis. CDPH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that expectant mothers receive the whooping cough booster shot (also called Tdap, or tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis vaccine) at the earliest opportunity between 27 and 36 weeks of every pregnancy, even if previously immunized.

Getting immunized during pregnancy boosts a mother's immunity and passes on protective antibodies directly to their babies before birth. This helps protect newborns until they are old enough to begin receiving their own whooping cough immunizations at 6 to 8 weeks of age. Even one dose may offer some protection against potential fatal whooping cough disease in infants.

Dr. Gail Newel, San Benito County's Health Officer, agrees. "It is so important that every pregnant woman receives a pertussis vaccine during each pregnancy. This provides protection to her newborn baby until they are old enough to be vaccinated."

To avoid the spread of whooping cough, CDPH recommends that:

- Parents immunize their babies against whooping cough as soon as possible.
- California 7th grade students receive the whooping cough booster, Tdap.
- Adults receive a whooping cough booster once in their lives.

Most health plans cover Tdap immunizations, and many pharmacies offer it. Medi-Cal members may be able to get their Tdap shots at the pharmacy where they usually pick up their prescriptions. Call your health plan to learn more. If you do not have health insurance, call your [local health department](#) to find a low- or no-cost location.

For more [information about pertussis](#) please call Public Health Services at (831) 637-5367 or go to San Benito Public Health Services website at <http://hhsa.cosb.us/publichealth/>. Information is also available on CDPH's website: www.cdph.ca.gov

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