



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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March 11, 2019

TO: Long Beach Unified School District Principals, Private School Administrators, and Daycare Center Administrators

FROM: Anissa Davis, M.D., M.P.H., Health Officer, City of Long Beach

SUBJECT: Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Advisory and Recommendations for Schools and Daycares, 2019

Dear School Director/Administrator:

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has anticipated that 2019 will be a very active year for pertussis (also known as whooping cough). Currently, the number of cases reported in Long Beach in 2019 are already much higher than expected. The Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services (Health Department), is informing the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), local private schools, and daycare centers about the risk for pertussis in school settings as well as providing guidance on how to prevent transmission in these environments.

Symptoms & Treatment

Pertussis is a bacterial infection that can spread through the air when people cough. It usually starts like a common cold and gets increasingly worse over 1-2 weeks as a cough develops. People with pertussis may have coughing spells in which they are unable to catch their breath between coughs. As they catch their breath at the end of a coughing spell, they may loudly gasp (“whoop”), vomit, or feel like they’re choking. Young babies with pertussis may not have a cough, but may have trouble breathing and gag, gasp, turn blue, or vomit. Pertussis can be treated with antibiotics, which are most effective when given as early as possible during the course of the infection.

Vaccine

The tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis vaccine (Tdap) can protect against pertussis, but can wane over time. Because of this, those entering 7th grade must show proof of a Tdap booster. In addition, pregnant women should receive Tdap vaccine during each pregnancy, at the earliest opportunity between 27-36 weeks gestation to protect the baby against pertussis once baby is born. Babies under one year of age and especially those under six months of age, are most likely to get very sick if they develop pertussis. Babies should be kept away from people with a cough if at all possible, and if they show any signs of trouble breathing or a coughing, they should be checked by a doctor right away. Tdap vaccine is widely available at doctor’s offices, some pharmacies and local health departments and is generally covered by most insurance plans.

Transmission & Prevention

Like many respiratory illnesses, pertussis is spread by coughing and sneezing while in close contact with

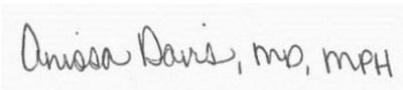
others, who then breathe in the bacteria. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends practicing good hygiene to prevent the spread of all respiratory illnesses. To practice good hygiene you should encourage your students and staff to:

- Get vaccinated
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Put used tissue in the waste basket
- Cough or sneeze into upper sleeve or elbow, not in their hands, if no tissue is available
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not available

Disease Control

The Health Department's Epidemiology Program investigates each case of pertussis, and conducts pertussis surveillance year-round. If someone at your school is diagnosed with pertussis, the Health Department will work with the patient and the school nurse to determine when it is safe for them to return to school. Should you suspect an outbreak of pertussis at your school, report this immediately to the LBDHHS Epidemiology Program at (562)570-4302, or email LBEpi@longbeach.gov with any questions. You can also visit our website at www.longbeach.gov/pertussis for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anissa Davis, MD, MPH". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light-colored rectangular background.

Anissa Davis, MD, MPH, Health Officer

City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services

Attachment: Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Recommendations for Parents, 2019 (English & Spanish)