
Media Release



Whooping Cough (Pertussis) Outbreak Declared August 14, 2023 - For immediate release

The Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) has declared a whooping cough (Pertussis) outbreak in the central part of the district. Timiskaming Health Unit staff are contacting and notifying individuals who have been exposed.

As a result of the increase in pertussis circulating within our district, THU would like to remind residents of the following:

- stay home if you are sick;
- adults and older adults can be reservoirs of transmission and as their protective levels decrease over time it is important to receive one booster in adulthood;
- people of all ages are encouraged to contact their health unit office to make an appointment if they are due or overdue for their vaccination.

Whooping cough is distinctive from the common cold, bronchitis, or croup, in the severity and the duration of the cough. While whooping cough starts like a common cold, with sneezing, runny nose, low grade fever, and a mild cough, the cough will get worse over two weeks. After two weeks, coughing spells develop and the cough may end in a whooping sound. The cough may be so severe that the person can gag or throw up during the fits of cough. The coughing spells can last for weeks or months. Older children and adults may have prolonged cough without the “whoop” or vomiting. “Whooping cough germs spread easily from person to person. Children under the age of one are at the most risk for severe infection. Immunization provides the best protection against whooping cough,” said Dr. Glenn Corneil, Timiskaming’s Acting Medical Officer of Health.

Important to know about whooping cough vaccination and exposure:

- The whooping cough (Pertussis) vaccine is part of routine immunization for infants, children, and teenagers. The vaccine is given at two, four, six, and 18 months of age. A booster dose is needed between four and six years of age and again at 14-16 years of age. Immunity decreases over time; therefore, one booster dose of vaccine is recommended for adults.
- Check with your health care provider or the THU to ensure you and your family are up to date with vaccination. Those who receive immunizations at THU or who report immunization to THU through licensed childcare or school may review their immunization record on-line here: <http://timiskaminghu.com/281/Immunization>.
- Pregnant or immunocompromised individuals should follow-up with their health care provider to confirm their history of vaccination. A booster of the pertussis vaccine is recommended for all pregnant women in their third trimester.
- Hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infections. In addition, using a tissue and coughing and sneezing into your arm, not your hand is also effective in reducing spread of infection.

- If you develop symptoms of whooping cough in the next 21 days, follow-up with your health care provider and notify the Timiskaming Health Unit.

For further information or if you have any comments or concerns, please call the Timiskaming Health Unit at 705-647-4305 or tollfree at 1-866-747-4305.

www.timiskaminghu.com

For more information

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