

Grant County Health Department
401 S. Adams St.
Marion, IN 46953
765-662-0377 ext. 112

August 27, 2013

Dear Parents,

With pertussis on the rise, the Grant County Health Department would like to provide the community with facts about pertussis and information to help you understand more about this infectious disease.

Pertussis also called “whooping cough” can be a very scary disease. Your child can cough until they turn blue, bruise ribs, or even cough so hard they vomit. None of these things sound fun, especially when they are happening to your small child whom is more than likely afraid they are not going to catch their breath. Others maybe lucky and only have a persistent cough that mimics allergies. It does not matter the extent of cough you or your child have, if it is pertussis, it is contagious until properly treated with the appropriate antibiotic. Not all antibiotics will kill the pertussis bacteria.

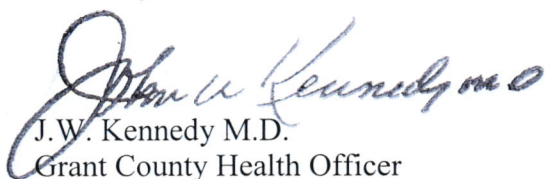
Anyone can get pertussis, there is no age limit. The first symptoms of pertussis are similar to the common cold. You or your child may also have a low fever. After a week or two, the cough will become worse. Then the patient may develop coughing fits, or spasms, followed by vomiting or trouble catching a breath. Sometimes, younger children will have a “whoop” sound after a coughing fit.

Although some people may appear healthy in between coughing fits, please do NOT attend work or large gatherings, or send your child to school if he or she has any of the signs and symptoms of pertussis. If you think your child may have pertussis, call your child’s doctor immediately for treatment. If your child comes to school with these symptoms, you will be called to take your child home and will need to take him/her to a doctor to be checked for pertussis. Schools have the right to keep your child out of school for 21 days if treatment is refused.

Patients with pertussis will be off work or out of school for 5 complete days while taking the proper antibiotic. Our best protection against pertussis is good hand hygiene, covering our coughs, and vaccinations. Keeping up-to-date with pertussis vaccine helps prevent disease, but the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has identified cases of pertussis in children who have received all their pertussis shots.

You can find more information about whooping cough on the ISDH Website:
http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/2012QuickFact_Pertussis.pdf.

Sincerely,



J.W. Kennedy M.D.
Grant County Health Officer