



10th February 2017

TO: Staff and students in Terito and Koru hubs at Amesbury School, Churton Park.

PERTUSSIS (WHOOING COUGH)

Two children who attend Amesbury Primary School have been diagnosed with probable Whooping Cough. They would have been infectious from the beginning of the school year. The incubation period is between 6 and 20 days, average is 14 days. Whooping cough may start with a runny nose which then proceeds to coughing. If you have the disease you are infectious from the time of the runny nose until 3 weeks after the bad cough starts. If treated with either a 14 day course of Erythromycin or 5 day course of Azithromycin, you are no longer infectious after you have completed 5 days of the antibiotic treatment.

Regional Public Health has had several notifications recently of confirmed cases of Whooping Cough (Pertussis) in adults and children. The bacteria are circulating in the community, which potentially can put young babies and small children at risk of this highly infectious disease. **In children under one year of age this can be very serious. Women in the last 4 weeks of pregnancy are advised to see their GP or Lead Maternity Carer.**

For staff and pupils we recommend the following actions:

- Anyone with a persistent cough should see their doctor, and remain away from school until the doctor is sure it is not whooping cough.
- All children should be up-to-date with their Pertussis (Whooping Cough) immunisations and are advised to check with their family doctor. Pertussis immunisation is given at six weeks, three months, five months and a booster at 4 and 11 years of age.
- Boostrix vaccine is also recommended and free for pregnant women between (28-38) weeks of pregnancy to reduce their risk of getting the disease and passing it onto their new born baby. The vaccine provides protection pre and post delivery to mother and up to six weeks post delivery for baby.
- Boostrix Vaccine is recommended but not funded for; Early child care workers, health professionals that care for young children, families of new born babies.

Whooping cough is usually characterised by a cough lasting longer than two weeks with spasms of coughing ending in vomiting or difficulty breathing. This is often accompanied by a whooping sound. However don't wait until someone has had the cough for more than two weeks before checking it out. Remember that adults can also get whooping cough but usually do not have the classical whooping and vomiting after bouts of coughing.

If you have any queries please contact your family doctor or practice nurse, or phone the Communicable Disease Team (Public Health Nurse or Medical Officer) on ☎ (04) 570 9002.

Yours sincerely

Janine Dugdale
Public Health Nurse
For Medical Officer of Health
Disease Prevention

Regional Public Health