



Date: 1/22/2018

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Several students in the community have been diagnosed with pertussis. You are getting this letter even though your child is **NOT** considered to be a close contact to the person; we want you to be aware of the situation. Close contacts received a different letter with additional guidance.

Pertussis is an infection that affects the airways and is easily spread from person-to-person by coughing or sneezing. Pertussis is most commonly spread when a person is within 3 feet of a pertussis case. The longer the contact exists, the more likely that pertussis will spread. Its severe cough can last for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits and/or vomiting. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be very dangerous for infants and people with weakened immune systems. Family members with pertussis, especially mothers, can spread pertussis to newborns. Unvaccinated persons are especially susceptible.

Recommendations:

1. If your child has a cough:
 - Keep your child home from school or day care and activities, such as sports, parties, church or other group activities.
 - Make an appointment with your child's doctor as soon as possible and tell the doctor that your child may have been exposed to pertussis.
- a) If your child is diagnosed with pertussis:
 - Tell the school or day care that your child has been diagnosed with pertussis.
 - Your child will need to stay home from school and activities, such as sports or church until your child has been on antibiotics for 5 days to treat pertussis.
 - Ask your child's doctor to notify the Orange County Health Department of the diagnosis.
- b) If your child's doctor says your child does NOT have pertussis:
 - Ask for a note from the doctor telling the school or day care that your child's cough is NOT pertussis and that your child can return to school/day care and other activities at any time.

Giving preventive medication to close contacts of a pertussis case is recommended if the contact is at high risk of developing severe pertussis or is a close contact to someone at high risk of developing severe pertussis. Your child is not considered to be a close contact therefore preventative medication is not required for your child. Please be aware that this could change if more cases are diagnosed and/or if your child is not vaccinated.

Please make sure your family's vaccinations are up-to-date. Protection against pertussis from the childhood vaccine, DTaP, decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, should get a pertussis booster vaccine called "Tdap" to protect themselves and infants near or around them. If you need the Tdap vaccine, contact your medical provider or call Orange County Health Department for an appointment.

If you bring your child to a doctor for pertussis, please show this letter to him or her.

If you have questions or concerns please contact your medical provider or you can call Lulia Vann, Public Health Services Manager at 919-245-2425. Also, for more information, go to www.cdc.gov/pertussis

Respectfully,

Quintana Stewart, MPA
Orange County Health Director