



MAIN OFFICE
1250 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, ID 83401
Phone: (208) 522-0310
Fax: (208) 525-7063
www.phd7.idaho.gov

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Mimi Taylor, PIO
Office: (208) 533-3155
Cell: (208) 521-6722

Whooping Cough Cases in Southeast Idaho Continue 5 confirmed cases since January 2014

Eastern Idaho – Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory tract infection. Although it initially resembles an ordinary cold, whooping cough may eventually turn more serious and can be fatal, especially in babies less than 1 year of age. Whooping cough is known for uncontrollable, violent coughing which often makes it hard to breathe.

The number of whooping cough cases reported since early 2014 total 32 cases in Idaho, 5 of which are within our health district (2 in Bonneville County, 1 in Jefferson County, & 2 in Madison County). This number exceeds the cases reported in the same period in any of the last five years. Many states surrounding Idaho; Montana and Washington in particular, have had high disease rates in recent years, so it is not surprising that more cases are being seen in Idaho. Many Idahoans were vaccinated in response to an infant whooping cough death in Pocatello in May, 2012.

The **best** way to prevent whooping cough is to get your child vaccinated. “Parents who follow recommended immunization guidelines can avoid unnecessary cases of whooping cough, meningitis, and other serious illness. Protecting children from preventable diseases along with boosting Idaho’s immunization rate is a top priority of Eastern Idaho Public Health District (EIPHD), the Eastern Idaho Immunization Task Force, and other partners,” stated Gary Rillema, Family and Community Health Services Division Director at EIPHD. “It is important that we remain vigilant in protecting our vulnerable children.” Families who are expecting a newborn should make sure all those who will have close contact with baby are up to date on the pertussis vaccination. Adults can also be carriers of the whooping cough bacteria, so if you have not had your adult Tdap vaccine, call Eastern Idaho Public Health District (numbers listed on page 2 of press release) or see your medical provider.

In addition to vaccination, parents can also help protect infants and children from whooping cough by keeping them away, as much as possible, from anyone who has cold symptoms or is coughing.

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It is also important to recognize the symptoms of whooping cough and seek medical attention if necessary.

Early symptoms of whooping cough can last for 1 to 2 weeks and usually include:

- Runny nose
- Low-grade fever (generally minimal throughout the course of the disease)
- Mild, occasional cough
- Apnea — a pause in breathing (in infants)

As the disease progresses, the traditional symptoms of whooping cough appear and include:

- Fits of many, rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched "whoop"
- Vomiting (throwing up)
- Exhaustion (very tired) after coughing fits

If you have any questions about whooping cough or childhood vaccinations, please call James Corbett, Immunization Coordinator at EIPHD at (208) 533-3223 or check our website at www.phd7.idaho.gov.

Eastern Idaho Public Health District Immunization Contact Information:

Bonneville County – 533.3235

Clark County – 374.5216

Custer County – 879.2504 (Challis) & 588.2947 (Mackay)

Fremont County – 624.7585

Jefferson County – 745.7297 (Rigby) & 663.4860 (Mud Lake)

Lemhi County – 756.2123

Madison County – 356.3239

Teton County – 354.2220

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