



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION
Dec. 10, 2008

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WHOOPIING COUGH CASE REPORTED IN RANCHO SANTA FE *Tdap Vaccine Urged for Older Children, Teenagers and Adults*

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) reports that a 5-year-old student at Horizon Prep School in Rancho Santa Fe has whooping cough (pertussis), a highly contagious disease that causes severe coughing. The student was not immunized against the disease.

“All of the other students but one in the student’s class had been immunized,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. “Vaccination is strongly recommended for siblings and parents as well because of the high risk posed by whooping cough, especially to infants. We urge parents to have their children immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases.”

Teenagers and adults are recommended to get the Tdap booster, which provides protection against whooping cough, diphtheria and tetanus.

Horizon Prep School is working closely with HHSA and has notified parents through letters and phone calls about the possibility of classmates’ exposure to whooping cough.

Named for the "whoop" sound victims may make during or after a severe coughing spell, whooping cough usually starts with flu-like symptoms, such as runny nose, sneezing, fever, and a mild cough. Symptoms can last up to two weeks and may be followed by severe coughing fits and vomiting. Whooping cough can occur at any age, but infants and young children are at highest risk of life threatening complications, such as pneumonia, brain damage, and death. Individuals with symptoms of whooping cough should call their health care provider.

The incubation period is commonly 7–10 days, with a range of 4–21 days. It is recommended that children get five doses of DTaP vaccine, one dose at 2 mos., 4 mos., 6 mos., 15-18 mos., and 4-6 years of age. It is also recommended that people 11- 64 years of age receive a single dose of Tdap vaccine, given in place of a “tetanus booster” (Td).

In 2007, there were 50 cases of whooping cough reported in the county. There have been 51 cases of whooping cough reported in San Diego County to date this year, including this case. For more information about whooping cough, please call the HHSA Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661, or visit the Web site at www.sdiz.org.

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