



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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WHOOPIING COUGH CASE REPORTED TO COUNTY *Tdap Vaccine Urged for Children and Adults*

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) reports that a 9-year-old student at Fletcher Hills Elementary School has whooping cough (pertussis), a highly contagious disease that causes severe coughing. The student was immunized against the disease.

“Though no vaccine is 100 percent effective, the benefits of immunization are still significant in preventing disease,” said Dean Sidelinger, M.D., M.S. Ed., Deputy County Public Health Officer. “The risks of whooping cough to infants are high, as they can suffer from complications. This is a reminder to parents to be sure that their children are immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases. Teenagers and adults should get the Tdap booster, which provides protection against whooping cough, diphtheria and tetanus.”

Fletcher Hills Elementary School is working closely with HHSA and has notified parents through letters and e-mails 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 mo., 4 mo., 6 mo., 15-18 mo., 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 39 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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