



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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LA MESA, IMPERIAL BEACH STUDENTS DIAGNOSED WITH WHOOPING COUGH *Two New Cases Brings Total to 50 This Year*

A 9-year-old student of Oneonta Elementary School in Imperial Beach and a 10-year-old student of Murray Manor Elementary School in La Mesa have been diagnosed with pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough. In 2008, there were 51 cases of whooping cough reported in the county. There have been 50 cases to date this year, including these two.

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is working closely with school officials in both the South Bay Union and La Mesa-Spring Valley school districts and notification letters have been sent to the parents of all students who may have come into contact with the ill students. School year ended on June 19 at Murray Manor and June 25 at Oneonta.

"We are seeing whooping cough cases across the county," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., San Diego County Public Health Officer. "This is a highly contagious disease and parents should consult their primary care physician about testing for whooping cough if they notice symptoms such as severe coughing spells."

Named for the "whoop" sound children and adults sometimes make when they try to breathe in 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. These symptoms may be mild and brief, or last up to two weeks, but are often followed by severe coughing fits that may be associated with vomiting. Fever, if present, is usually mild. It is treatable with antibiotics.

Whooping cough can occur at any age, but infants and young children are at highest risk of life-threatening complications, the most common of which is pneumonia. In adolescents and adults, rib fractures and difficulty sleeping may occur. Anyone who is not immunized is at a higher risk for severe whooping cough.

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 one-time dose of Tdap, given in place of a "tetanus booster," which is administered every 10 years.

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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