

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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Department of Health in Columbia County confirms one case of Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

~Pertussis can infect persons of all ages, yet is most serious in infants and young children~

COLUMBIA COUNTY – The Florida Department of Health in Columbia County (DOH-Columbia) today confirmed a case of pertussis, or whooping cough, in an unvaccinated 6 month old child. Health officials are encouraging residents to ensure they have been vaccinated against the disease.

“We urge the community to take the threat of pertussis and the necessity of immunization seriously,” said DOH-Columbia Administrator Mark Lander. “Immunizing children helps protect the health of the whole community, especially those people who cannot be immunized. This includes children who are too young to have completed their immunizations, those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons and those with poor immune systems.”

Pertussis is very contagious and spreads easily person to person. The bacteria (germs) that cause pertussis live in the nose, mouth and throat. People get pertussis by breathing in the droplets and germs sprayed into the air by an infected person during coughing, sneezing or talking. It is also spread by contact with a tissue or sharing a cup used by a person infected with pertussis.

Pertussis begins as a mild upper respiratory infection. The first symptoms are like those of a cold, including sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever and a mild cough. Within two weeks, the cough becomes much worse, and can last up to six weeks or more.

Children and older adults with pertussis often have episodes of uncontrolled coughing followed by a noticeable intake of breath that sounds like a “whoop.” These “whooping” coughing spells can make it hard for a child or older adult to eat, drink or even breathe. Pertussis can be difficult to diagnose in infants who present with nonspecific symptoms, typically without a cough. To listen to the sound of a pertussis cough, visit www.soundsofpertussis.com.

Pertussis is preventable. The most important way to prevent pertussis is for all children to complete their primary diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis (DTaP) immunization series by 2 years of age. All children should receive an additional dose of DTaP prior to kindergarten entry and a tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (Tdap) booster prior to entering seventh grade.

Adults ages 18 through 64 should receive one dose of Tdap vaccine. Pregnant women should receive Tdap during the third trimester of every pregnancy. A tetanus-diphtheria (Td) booster should be received every 10 years after that. Any adolescent or adult caring for infants should receive a Tdap regardless of when they received their last Td.

Despite the availability of an effective vaccine for infants and booster shots for adolescents and adults, pertussis continues to cause serious illness and death. Pertussis cases have been increasing since the 1980s as the number of infants and children who have never been immunized increases.

To learn more about pertussis (whooping cough) visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/vaccine-preventable-disease/pertussis/index.html>.

To learn more about immunizations and vaccine safety visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>.

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The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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