



## Buncombe County Health and Human Services

Aging and Veteran's Services ~ Public Assistance & Work Support Strategies  
Public Health ~ Social Work Services  
Amanda Stone, MSW  
Health and Human Services Director

November 26, 2014

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have been exposed to someone with pertussis (whooping cough) at Childcare Network on Sweeten Creek Road. Pertussis is an infection that affects the airways and lungs. It is easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. It causes a severe cough that can last for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits or vomiting. Anyone can get pertussis, but it is especially dangerous and can even be deadly for babies and people with weakened immune systems.

Sometimes antibiotics are given to people who have been exposed to pertussis even if they don't have symptoms. This is done to keep babies and other vulnerable people from getting pertussis. Ask your child's doctor to prescribe antibiotics as soon as possible to your child if he or she meets either of the following conditions:

1. If your child has a weakened immune system or a pre-existing health condition that may be worsened by a pertussis infection.
2. If your child lives with or has close contact with any of the following people:
  - A woman who is in her third trimester of pregnancy,
  - An infant younger than 12 months old, or
  - Anyone with a weakened immune system or other pre-existing health condition that may be worsened by a pertussis infection.

**If your child has recently started coughing, please keep him or her out of group activities, such as childcare, school, sports or play groups; and contact your child's doctor as soon as possible.** Let the doctor know that your child is coughing and might have been exposed to pertussis. If you bring your child to see the doctor for possible pertussis, please show the "Dear Colleague" letter to him or her.

If your child is diagnosed with pertussis by his or her doctor, tell the childcare or school that your child has been diagnosed with pertussis and keep your child home from childcare, school and group activities until your child has been on antibiotics to treat pertussis for five days.

Please make sure your family's vaccinations are up-to-date. Protection against pertussis from the childhood vaccine, DTaP, decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, need to get a pertussis booster shot called "Tdap" to protect themselves and infants near or around them. To get the Tdap vaccine, contact your doctor or call the Buncombe County Immunization Clinic at 828-250-5096.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Buncombe County Disease Control at 828-250-5109.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jennifer Mullendore  
Medical Director  
Buncombe County Health and Human Services