6/5/2024

Dear School staff:

We want to inform you that we are seeing an increase in pertussis (whooping cough) in children in Buncombe County. Anyone can get pertussis, even those who have been vaccinated. Pertussis is especially dangerous for babies. <mark>Please read the included Pertussis Fact Sheet for more information.</mark>

If you have recently started coughing, please stay home from work and group activities and contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible. Let the healthcare provider know that you are coughing and that pertussis is being seen in the community. You should wear a mask when around others until directed by your healthcare provider.

If you are diagnosed with pertussis, tell your employer and stay home from work and other group activities until you have taken 5 days of antibiotics to treat pertussis. This helps prevent the spread of pertussis to others.

Please make sure you and your family's vaccinations are up to date.
- Babies and children younger than 7 years old should get the DTaP vaccine on the recommended vaccination schedule.
- Protection against pertussis from the DTaP vaccine decreases over time. Therefore, older children and adults should get at least one dose of the pertussis booster vaccine called Tdap, regardless of how long it has been since their most recent tetanus vaccine.
- Tdap may be given as the routine tetanus booster vaccine every 10 years.
- Pregnant people should get a dose of the Tdap vaccine in the third trimester of each pregnancy to protect themselves and their infants.
- If you have questions about pertussis vaccines or need one, contact your healthcare provider or call the Buncombe County Health and Human Services Immunization Clinic at 828-250-5096.

If you have any questions or concerns about pertussis, please call the Buncombe County Communicable Disease staff at 828-250-5109.

Sincerely,

Ellis Matheson, DNP, RN   Jennifer Mullendore, MD, MSPH
Public Health Director   Medical Director