

**Communicable Disease Epidemiology
and Immunization Section**

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**Health Alert: Pertussis in King County
January 10, 2012**

Action Requested:

- **Be aware of an increase in pertussis reports, particularly among infants**
- **Fully immunize all children against pertussis, and provide a single dose of Tdap as recommended by national guidelines to:**
 - **Children 7-10 years who are not fully vaccinated against pertussis**
 - **Adolescents 11-18 years who have completed the DTP/DTaP series**
 - **Pregnant and post-partum women***
 - **All adults aged 19-64 years**
 - **Adults aged 65 years and older who have or anticipate having close contact with infants less than 12 months old**
- **Prioritize vaccinating household members and other close contacts of infants**
- **Consider the diagnosis of pertussis in the following situations, even if the patient has been immunized against pertussis:**
 - **Respiratory symptoms of any duration in infants <12 months, even if there is clinical or laboratory evidence of RSV infection (because co-infection has been documented)**
 - **Cough illness > 2 weeks duration in patients of any age**
 - **Respiratory illness of any duration in patients of any age who have had contact with persons with prolonged cough illness, or a confirmed pertussis case**
- **For suspected pertussis cases, obtain a nasopharyngeal specimen for pertussis polymerase chain reaction (PCR), which is more sensitive and rapid than culture**
- **Report pertussis cases within 24 hours to Public Health at (206) 296-4774**

Background

Reports of confirmed pertussis cases in King County have increased dramatically in the past month. Of the 97 cases reported in 2011, nearly a quarter were reported in December. Among the infants reported in 2011, 70% were most likely infected by a household member. Since December 1st, 28 confirmed cases have been reported, with nearly 1/3 in infants. Among the infants reported in December who had parents who could be interviewed, all had more than one household member who was eligible for Tdap but was unvaccinated against pertussis.

*This year, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended that pregnant women who have not already received a Tdap booster should be vaccinated during pregnancy, preferably during the third trimester or late second trimester (after 20 weeks gestation). If not vaccinated during pregnancy, unvaccinated women should be vaccinated in the immediate post-partum period before discharge. Other adult and adolescent household members and close contacts of infants should also be vaccinated before or during the pregnancy to protect them and the newborn against pertussis.

Resources: Pertussis resources for clinicians and patients including an issue brief on the prevention of pertussis in infants and a patient flyer on pertussis and pregnancy (available in Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Amharic, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, and Somali) are available at: www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/diseases/whoopingcough.aspx