

Nursing Services

lacrosseschools.org

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SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
LA CROSSE



Dear Parents/Guardians:

The La Crosse County Health Department is reporting a Pertussis (Whooping Cough) outbreak in La Crosse County. Currently the cases include students from other area school districts. Please keep in mind our students are highly mobile and are often in contact with students in other districts through activities (i.e. sports, co-curricular events and shared programs). It is important that you not send your student to school if he or she has any of the signs or symptoms of pertussis listed below. Students with suspected pertussis **should be tested, treated with appropriate antibiotics and isolated** until at least 5 days of antibiotic treatment have been completed or testing is negative.

Pertussis is a bacterial disease that is spread through the air by direct face-to-face contact with a case of pertussis. Pertussis begins with cold like symptoms and a cough that becomes much worse over a period of 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of cough ("coughing fits") followed by a whooping noise. However, older children, adults and very young infants may not develop the whoop. There is generally no fever. People with pertussis may have series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not make the cough go away. Pertussis is most serious in infants and preschoolers who have not received DTaP vaccine. DTaP vaccine is only licensed for children ages of 2 months through 6 years of age.

Routine immunizations of infants and children are recommended. Protection after immunization is not lifelong, but is highly effective during the years immediately following vaccination. Persons who acquire pertussis after having been immunized against pertussis usually have milder illness than persons who have never been immunized against pertussis. Since 2006, a pertussis vaccine for adolescents and adults, called Tdap, has been routinely recommended as a one-time booster to be given at age 11 or 12 years. Adolescents and adults who have never received Tdap should receive one dose of Tdap as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please contact your health care provider and/or the La Crosse County Health Department at 608-785-9723.

Thank you.

La Crosse School District Nurses