

News Release

For Immediate Release

September 9, 2019

Contact: Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Cases in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has confirmed one additional case of pertussis (whooping cough) in Southwest Nebraska. This is the fifth case of pertussis within the nine-county health district in two weeks. SWNPHD is working with Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Epidemiology to monitor these cases and provide pertussis education.

Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory disease, which can be hard to distinguish from a cold in its early stages. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), pertussis is known for uncontrollable, violent coughing which often makes it hard to breathe. Pertussis can affect people of all ages but can be very serious, even deadly, for babies less than a year old. The best way to protect against pertussis is by creating a "cocoon" around infants by having potential contacts get vaccinated, such as parents, grandparents, older siblings, and babysitters or other childcare providers.

"Getting vaccines at the recommended time is the best way to protect against serious diseases like whooping cough. Parents should talk to their healthcare provider about vaccination concerns before opting out," explains Melissa Propp, RN, SWNPHD Surveillance Nurse. "Vaccine preventable diseases are on the rise. This is a good time to review your shot records and make sure everyone in your family is current on their shots."

According to the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the vaccination schedule is as follows:

Young children – DTaP at ages 2,4, and 6 months; 15-18 months and 4-6 years (five total)

Preteens – Tdap at 11-12 years

Pregnant Women – Tdap between the 27th to 36th week of each pregnancy

Adults – Tdap – any time if not previously vaccinated; any other time as recommended by health officials

Before the whooping cough vaccines were recommended for all infants, about 8,000 people in the United States died each year from whooping cough. Today, because of the vaccine, this number has dropped to fewer than 20 per year.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties. For more information call Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street, McCook – one block north of Arby's and 501 Broadway, Imperial – entrance on 5th Street. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook and Twitter.

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