



Warren Township Schools

Shining Brighter Every Day

September 26, 2016

Dear Parents:

We were informed this morning of one confirmed case of pertussis (whooping cough) identified at Angelo L. Tomaso School. The student has been treated with antibiotics and is no longer contagious. Students in this grade level are bringing home a hardcopy notification with this information. This message is being shared more widely as a precaution.

Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by a cough or sneeze. Symptoms usually begin 4-21 days after exposure. Pertussis begins with cold symptoms and a cough, which become much worse over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughing fits followed by a whooping noise. However, older children, adults and very young infants may not develop the whoop. There is generally only a slight fever. People with pertussis may have a series of severe coughing fits followed immediately by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching their breath. **The cough is often worse at night, and cough medicines usually do not help alleviate the cough.**

If your child has been around someone with pertussis, s/he might become sick with the disease. This is especially true if your child is not up to date with his/her pertussis vaccinations. Even if your child's shots are up to date, s/he might still get pertussis. If your child has been in contact with someone with pertussis, antibiotics prescribed by your doctor may prevent him/her from becoming ill. If your child is already sick, giving antibiotics early can help your child get well faster and lower the chances of spreading the disease to others.

Please consider the following New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services recommendations:

1. Infants under one year old, especially those under six months, are most likely to have severe symptoms if they develop pertussis. When possible, young infants should be kept away from people with a cough. **Infants with any coughing illness should be promptly seen by their doctor.**
2. Pertussis vaccine has an adolescent and adult booster now available for persons 10 years of age and older. If you have children who have not been completely immunized against pertussis, we recommend you now talk to your child's doctor about the benefits of vaccination.
3. If your child comes down with cold symptoms that include a cough, talk to your child's doctor immediately. Tell the doctor that pertussis has been identified at your child's school.
4. It is generally recommended that those persons having close contact with a pertussis case receive antibiotics from their doctor to help prevent them from getting pertussis.
5. Do not send your child to school if s/he has any signs or symptoms of pertussis.

We will continue to monitor the situation and if actions to control the spread of pertussis among students become necessary, we will again notify parents. If you have specific concerns or questions about your child's health, please contact your health care provider.

Attached you will find additional details about the disease provided by the New Jersey Department of Health. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to the school nurse for additional information.

Respectfully,

Matthew A. Mingle