

Pertussis Transmission Ongoing in Vermont

To: Health Care Providers, Hospitals, and Ambulatory Care Centers
From: Susan Schoenfeld, Deputy State Epidemiologist for Infectious Disease

– Please Distribute Widely –

During the 6-week period between May 27 to July 7, there were 26 confirmed pertussis cases reported from six counties: Chittenden (12 cases), Addison (6 cases), Caledonia (4 cases), Windsor (2 cases), Bennington (1 case), Rutland (1 case).

The age range for the 26 confirmed pertussis cases was 2 months to 61 years. The majority of cases (77%) were between the ages of 5 and 18 years.

Expanded information for clinicians has been added to the Health Department's website:
<http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/pertussis/providers.aspx>.

ACTIONS REQUESTED

Report suspected cases to the Health Department's Epidemiology Unit by calling 802-863-7240.

- Consider pertussis in the differential diagnosis for patients with respiratory illness.
- Report suspect cases to the Health Department – regardless of laboratory confirmation – so that public health measures to control disease can be implemented.

Test patients with signs and symptoms consistent with pertussis (paroxysmal cough, whooping, post-tussive vomiting/gagging; apnea or cyanosis in infants).

- Consider testing for patients with prolonged coughing illness who are likely to have less classic pertussis symptoms (infants, adults) when the patient is at high risk for complications, or when the patient has high risk contacts.
- The Health Department Laboratory will be performing PCR testing for pertussis routinely on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. For questions about testing or to order specimen collection kits, call the Health Department Laboratory at 802-863-7336.

Treat suspected and confirmed cases.

- Treatment guidelines are available on the Health Department's website:
<http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/pertussis/documents/pertussistreatment.pdf>

Provide prophylaxis and control disease.

- Advise patients with suspected pertussis to stay home until treatment is completed.
- Treat infants with suspected pertussis empirically.
- Provide prophylaxis for infants and their household contacts when pertussis is suspected in any household member, without waiting for laboratory confirmation.

Vaccinate adolescent (age 11 and older) and adult patients with a single dose of Tdap.

- For information about ordering vaccine, call the Immunization Program at 802-863-7240.

Implement droplet precautions promptly for patients admitted with a cough illness if pertussis is considered in the differential diagnosis.