



Health

Public Health
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March 27, 2023

Dear Health Care Provider:

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Alert

Manitoba Health advises that a cluster of pertussis cases have been identified within the Southern Health-Santé Sud Region and is reminding health care providers of the importance of immunization, particularly in small children, to prevent further illness.

As of March 24, 2023, 11 cases have been reported to Public Health in 2023, primarily in the Southern Health-Santé Sud Region. Other Canadian jurisdictions, including Alberta and Ontario, have also recently reported increased pertussis activity. Current activity in Manitoba and other Canadian jurisdictions suggests pertussis circulation is returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Pertussis is a highly infectious disease and can affect individuals of any age; however, the severity is greatest among young infants. Infants one year and younger are at greatest risk of serious complications, including apneas, pneumonia, seizures, encephalopathy and death. Pregnant women in their third trimester are also at higher risk for more severe disease.

Immunization is the best way to protect against and limit the spread of pertussis. Pertussis immunization is safe and effective against preventing severe illness. All children should be up-to-date with their pertussis immunizations according to the applicable immunization schedules below:

Manitoba's Routine Immunization Schedule:

www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/schedules.html

OR

Manitoba's Recommended Immunization Schedules for Individuals NOT Previously Immunized:

www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/not.html

Tdap in Pregnancy: A Tdap vaccine should be routinely offered to all pregnant women in every pregnancy, irrespective of their immunization history. One dose of Tdap vaccine should ideally be provided between 27 and 32 weeks of gestation.

Manitoba's Pertussis Communicable Disease protocol outlines the recommended public health management of cases/contacts and health care reporting requirements:

www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/protocol/pertussis.pdf

Individuals with compatible symptoms should be tested. Infected individuals may be prescribed antibiotics and should stay home and avoid close contact with others until treatment is completed. Regional health authority staff will identify all contacts requiring chemoprophylaxis and refer them to their health care provider for prescriptions. All positive laboratory results for B. pertussis are reportable by the laboratory to Public Health.

Probable (clinical) cases of pertussis should be reported to the Public Health Surveillance Unit by secure fax (204-948-3044) using the Clinical Notification of Reportable Diseases and Conditions form www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/protocol/mhsu_0013.pdf.

Cooperation in Public Health investigation is appreciated.

Further resources on pertussis and immunizations:

www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/pertussis.html

www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/vaccines.html.

www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/vaccine-preventable-diseases/pertussis-whooping-cough.html

<https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/immunization>

Decreased Vaccination Rates

The provincial immunization program has noted a decreasing trend in vaccination rates in the following routine infant/pre-school immunizations: MMRV, DTaP-IPV-Hib, Men-C and Pneu-C-13 in the 2019, 2020 and 2021 birth cohorts compared to pre-pandemic levels, with the largest impact in rural regions. Parents/guardians should be encouraged to check immunization records and ensure children are up to date with vaccines. In addition, all health care providers are reminded to review their patient/client's immunization status to determine if any vaccines are outstanding based on Manitoba's Immunization Schedules.

Please share this information with colleagues at your facility/clinic.

Sincerely,

"Original signed by"

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