



Branch - Hillsdale - St. Joseph Community Health Agency

570 N. Marshall Road
Coldwater, MI 49036
(517) 279-9561
Fax (517) 278-2923

20 Care Drive
Hillsdale, MI 49242
(517) 437-7395
1-888-544-7395
Fax (517) 437-0166

1110 Hill Street
Three Rivers, MI 49093
(269) 273-2161
1-800-258-1092
Fax (269) 273-2452

WWW.BHSJ.ORG

February 3, 2012

Dear Parents,

There is a 5th grade student at Eastwood Elementary School who has a case of Pertussis, more commonly known as whooping cough. Pertussis is highly contagious and can last for several weeks. People are **most contagious** in the early stages of this illness, and can be contagious for up to 2 weeks. The vaccinations your children received when they were younger prevent the majority of this disease. However during the early teen years the protection from this vaccine tends to fade. If your child is older than 10, he or she may need to receive a booster vaccine. This shot is called Tdap, and you can consult your healthcare provider or the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency to find out if this shot is recommended for your child. **We are pulling shot records for all children who have had contact with this student. If we believe your child needs further attention, you will be notified individually.**

What should you do? Please be familiar with the signs and symptoms of this disease and see your healthcare provider if your child exhibits these symptoms. Keep sick children at home if at all possible.

The first symptoms of whooping cough are similar to those of a common cold:

- runny nose
- sneezing
- mild cough
- low-grade fever

After about 1 to 2 weeks, the dry, irritating cough evolves into coughing spells. These coughing spells can last for more than a minute. At the end of a spell, the child may make a characteristic whooping sound when breathing, which is how the disease gets its name. Between spells, the child usually feels well.

Please know that Sturgis Public Schools have been working closely with the Health Department to become familiar with the signs and symptoms of this disease and to assist us in providing information to parents about this disease and actions that can be taken to protect your child. We have included a "Frequently Asked Questions" sheet for your information and you can visit our website at www.bhsj.org for more information. If you have additional questions, please contact Aimmee Mullendore, Coordinator, St. Joseph County Office at 269-273-2161, ext. 241.

Sincerely,

Steve Todd, MPA, R.S.
Health Officer