

## Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Information

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment and local county health departments are continuing to see an increase in cases of pertussis statewide, including Pottawatomie and Shawnee counties.

Although transmission of pertussis bacteria requires prolonged close contact, we want you to be aware of this situation and alert you to the signs and symptoms. The disease is spread by air through direct face-to-face contact with the sick person. Pertussis begins with cold like symptoms, possible fever, and a cough that becomes much worse over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs ("coughing fits") followed by a whooping noise. However, older children, adults and very young infants may not develop the whoop. People with pertussis may also have a series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty breathing. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help alleviate the cough. The disease is most serious in unimmunized infants and preschoolers. **If you have preschool children at home make sure they are up to date with their immunizations.**

It is important to note that even though your child may have been vaccinated for pertussis, they can still become infected with pertussis, although their symptoms will most likely be more mild and may mimic bronchitis or asthma.

**Please check your child's immunization record to be sure they are current with their DTaP vaccine. The fifth dose of DTaP can be given as soon as they turn four and can boost a child's protection. An adult booster (Tdap) can be given as early as age 10-11.**

**If your child develops any symptoms suggestive of pertussis, immediately contact your physician for evaluation. It is important that you notify the school nurse if your child is diagnosed with pertussis.**

Please feel free to call the school nurses if you have any questions.

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USD 321 School Nurses