



Grant County Health District – Always Working for a Safer and Healthier Grant County

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To: Grant County Media

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Whooping Cough Cases Continue in Grant County Three New Cases in Children

Grant County, WA – Public Health Nurses in cooperation with the healthcare community continue to investigate additional cases of whooping cough (pertussis) in Grant County.

Since the beginning of the outbreak in August 2010, Grant County Health District has investigated 38 confirmed cases and nearly 500 people who have had contact with at least one of these cases. Between 2005-2009, Grant County averaged less than three cases of Pertussis per year. Grant County reported cases are from Quincy, Ephrata and Moses Lake. None of the current cases are hospitalized.

A typical case of whooping cough starts with a cough and runny nose for one-to-two weeks, followed by weeks to months of rapid coughing fits that sometimes ends with a whooping sound. “If you or your children have been coughing for more than two weeks please call your healthcare provider and discuss whether you and your family should be seen and tested for whooping cough,” states Dr. Alexander Brzezny, Grant County Health Officer.

The best way to prevent whooping cough is to get vaccinated. The childhood vaccine is called **DTaP**. The whooping cough booster vaccine for adolescents and adults is called **Tdap**. “Pregnant women and adults that have contact with pregnant women or infants under 12 months of age are especially urged to get a single dose of the Tdap booster,” states Shawta Sackett, RN, Grant County Health District Community Public Health Manager, “This includes parents, family members, child care workers, health care workers, and any others who haven’t received this vaccine.”

New Immunization Law for Entry into Schools and Childcares

A new state law took effect on July 22 that changes the process to get an immunization exemption for entry into schools and childcares. The new law requires a licensed healthcare provider to sign the Certificate of Exemption for a parent or guardian to exempt their child from the immunization requirements. The signature verifies that the provider gave the parent or guardian information about the benefits and risks of immunization. A parent or guardian can also turn in a signed letter from a healthcare provider stating the same information. It only applies to exemptions requested after this date. A healthcare provider doesn't need to sign the form for parents or guardians who demonstrate membership in a church or religious group that does not allow a healthcare provider to provide medical treatment or vaccines to a child.

For more information about whooping cough go to www.granthealth.org/pertussis.html.

For more information about the new immunization exemption requirements go to www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools/exemption-info.htm.