

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 11/12/2024

TO: Grant Co. Media & Grant Co. Healthcare Community.

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Whooping Cough Infections Continue to Climb Locally and Across the State

60 whooping cough infections in Grant County. It is highly likely there are more cases than has been reported.

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Whooping cough (pertussis) activity continues to increase sharply on local and state levels. Since June 2024, there have been 60 people (ages 3 months to 43 years) with whooping cough in Grant County. The last infection was reported on 11/6/2024. One person was hospitalized. It is highly likely there are more cases of whooping cough than reported. Before 2024, the last person with whooping cough in Grant County was reported in 2019.

Cases of whooping cough infections have been confirmed in Moses Lake, Soap Lake and Warden. Many of the infected individuals had not been vaccinated or were not up to date with the whooping cough vaccine.

The whooping cough vaccine is the best protection we have against the infection and severe illness. GCHD urges you to get the whooping cough vaccine if you are not up to date and stay home if you are sick. Infants are at the highest risk of severe illness. **If you are pregnant or have close contact with infants, getting vaccinated is especially important to help protect them.**

Healthcare Providers: GCHD asks healthcare providers to:

- Consider whooping cough in any patient who shows symptoms and immediately notify GCHD of the suspected infection. Contact GCHD - (509) 766-7960.
- Prioritize vaccination of household members and other close contacts of infants.
- [Review and implement guidance from Washington State Department of Health \(DOH\)'s most recent pertussis provider alert.](#)

About Whooping Cough:

Whooping cough is a highly contagious bacterial infection that can be especially dangerous for babies. It is mostly spread through coughing or sneezing. Whooping cough can often be mistaken for allergies, asthma or a cold.

Washington State: Current Situation

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) recently notified residents of a significant increase in whooping cough occurring statewide. As of November 2nd, 2024:

- 1,193 cases have been reported in Washington, a sharp increase from just 51 cases reported this time last year.
- 31 counties across the state have confirmed cases of whooping cough.
- 28 people have been hospitalized statewide, including 12 infants under the age of one.

Whooping Cough Symptoms:

Whooping cough may begin with common cold symptoms such as runny nose but can lead to severe coughing fits that can last for weeks or even months.

Early symptoms can last for 1 to 2 weeks and usually include:

- Runny nose
- Low-grade fever
- Mild, occasional cough
- Apnea – a pause in breathing (in babies)

Late symptoms may appear after 1 to 2 weeks of the infection. These are the more traditional symptoms of whooping cough and include:

- Fits of many, rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched "whoop"
- Vomiting during or after coughing fits
- Exhaustion after coughing fits

Exposure to Whooping Cough:

If you believe you have whooping cough, contact your doctor. If you have been exposed to whooping cough or have symptoms, call the clinic before you visit. Wear a mask and follow other clinic instructions when you go for your in-person visit.

Some people should receive antibiotics to prevent them from getting sick if they have been around someone with whooping cough. Stay away from other people until you have completed the first 5 days of treatment.

Whooping Cough Vaccination:

There are two vaccines that protect against whooping cough:

- DTaP is for babies and children younger than seven years.
 - Tdap is for kids seven years and older, adolescents, and adults.
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- Pregnant people are strongly encouraged to get the [Tdap vaccine](#) between 27 and 36 weeks of pregnancy. This helps protect newborns until they're old enough to get the vaccine.
- If vaccinated as a teenager (11 or older), you do not need an additional dose as an adult unless you are pregnant.

It's also important to wash your hands, cover your cough, and stay home whenever you're sick.

High-Risk Groups:

The whooping cough vaccine protects you and those most vulnerable to severe illness. Groups at greatest risk from whooping cough include:

- Infants under one year old
- Pregnant people (especially in the third trimester)
- People who have chronic respiratory illness

Treatment:

Whooping cough can be treated with antibiotics. It's important to start treatment as soon as possible to help from spreading the disease to others. Early treatment can also make the symptoms end sooner and be less severe.

If you are prescribed antibiotics for whooping cough, you should finish the prescription as directed by your doctor.

For more information:

Protect Your Family from Whooping Cough – [English](#) | [Russian](#) | [Ukrainian](#) | [Spanish](#)

Resources for Healthcare Providers:

[Washington State Department of Health report guidelines](#) | WA- DOH

[Vaccination Information for Healthcare Professionals](#) | CDC

[Specimen collection and Submission Instructions](#) | WA- DOH

[Best Practices for Healthcare Professionals on the Use of Polymerase Chain Reaction \(PCR\) for Diagnosing Pertussis](#) | CDC

[Pertussis: Key Messages for Healthcare Providers in Washington](#)

2024 GCHD & DOH Pertussis Provider Alerts:

- [DOH_Pertussis_ProviderAlert_11_6_24](#)
 - [Pertussis_ProviderAlert_9_9_24](#)
 - [DOH_Pertussis_Provider_5_15_24](#)
 - [Pertussis_ProviderAlert_2_21_24](#)
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