

May 21, 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The Chemung County Health Department has notified the district of a confirmed case of pertussis (whooping cough) at the high school level. Health privacy laws do not allow us to share more about the particular student, but because pertussis is a contagious disease, we felt it is important to share basic information with all parents as a precaution.

Pertussis is caused by a bacterium found in the mouth, nose, and throat of an infected person. Symptoms begin approximately five to 21 days after exposure (usually in seven to ten days) and resemble a common cold: sneezing, runny nose, mild cough, low-grade fever. The Health Department recommends that parents observe their children for symptoms. If your child is currently experiencing cold/cough symptoms, **notify your pediatrician of your student's possible exposure**. If a person has pertussis, after a few weeks of cold symptoms, coughing may become more severe and may include episodes of rapid coughing followed by gagging or vomiting.

Pertussis has become more common in our community in the last few years. If untreated, a person can transmit pertussis from the onset of symptoms to approximately three weeks into the cough. Please be aware pertussis **can occur** in those who have received childhood vaccination for this condition because protection decreases over time.

The Health Department recommends that parents review the immunization records of all household members to ensure they are up-to-date on their Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis vaccines (Tdap or D'TaP). Please contact your primary healthcare provider to determine whether you should receive this vaccination.

The Chemung County Health Department has vaccine available for those individuals who are uninsured/underinsured and do not have access to the vaccine through a physician's office.

Please be assured that the health of all our children is a priority. For more information about pertussis, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/index.html> or <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4212.pdf>. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your child's healthcare provider or the Chemung County Health Department at (607) 737-2028. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dr. Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent of Schools