

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

May 14, 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

A **confirmed** case of pertussis (whooping cough) has been reported in a student in the Suwannee County school system. Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by cough. Pertussis begins with cold symptoms and a cough which becomes much worse over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs ("coughing fits") which may be followed by a whooping noise. There is generally no fever. Older children, adults, and very young infants may not develop the whoop. People with pertussis may have a series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medications usually do not help ease the cough. People can get pertussis after being around someone with the illness. Unvaccinated children are at greatest risk, but even vaccinated children may develop the illness.

If your child had close, face to face, contact to someone with pertussis, antibiotics may lower their chance of getting sick. If your child is already sick, taking antibiotics early can help your child get well faster and lower the chances of spreading the disease to others. If your child has developed the symptoms of pertussis, please seek care from your healthcare provider and notify the FDOH-Suwannee County at 386-362-2708.

Please consider the following recommendations:

1. Infants under one year, and particularly under six months, are most likely to experience severe illness if they develop pertussis. When possible, young infants should be kept away from people with a cough. **Infants with any coughing illness should be promptly evaluated by their doctor.**
2. Students that develop a cough illness should be kept home until their symptoms resolve OR they have been evaluated by their healthcare provider. Tell them that there has been a case of pertussis identified in the school system.
3. Pertussis is a vaccine preventable disease. If you have children who have not been immunized or have not received the 11-12 year-old booster for pertussis, we recommend that you talk to your child's doctor.

Sincerely,

Kerry S. Waldron, MPA
FDOH-Suwannee Administrator