

# Pertussis Update: October 22, 2008

The Clark County Combined Health District (CCCHD) urges residents to take measures for protection against pertussis (whooping cough) disease.

The CCCHD has received reports of 32 pertussis (whooping cough) cases in 2008. Thirty-one of the cases have been discovered since the beginning of September. This number is high compared to 4 cases in 2007 and 8 cases in 2006. Several of the cases have a connection to the southwestern part of Clark County.

Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by bacteria, and is spread by respiratory droplets from the nose and mouth. It can be treated with antibiotics. Initially, symptoms can resemble those of a common cold. The cough can then become more severe and consists of episodes of rapid coughing periods followed by a characteristic “whoop.”

Infants and elderly individuals are at highest risk for severe complications of pertussis disease.

Vaccination is one method of protection from pertussis. A vaccine which included pertussis protection was licensed in 2005 as a booster shot for adolescents and adults. These individuals should have a tetanus booster every 5 to 10 years, replacing one of these tetanus boosters with a Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap) shot. Residents are encouraged to protect themselves and their loved ones by getting vaccinated and decreasing disease transmission in the community.

If you are one of the following people, you may receive the Tdap at the Health District for a \$5.00 fee. Please bring your shot record for the nurse to review before receiving the vaccination.

- a child between the ages of 10 and 18 years old
- an adult between the ages of 19 and 64 years old and you are the parent or primary caregiver of a child under 5 years old
- an adult between the ages of 19 and 64 years old and you work in a daycare with children under 5 years old

Adults or children who do not fall into the categories mentioned above should talk with their healthcare providers or contact the Health District for other options in obtaining the Tdap vaccine.