



Recommendations for Pertussis Exposures in Educational Settings

The following are guidelines recommended by the Monterey County Health Department for controlling the spread of pertussis (whooping cough) in educational settings:

1. Immediately exclude symptomatic individuals (persistent cough) from school until:

- 1) diagnosed with pertussis and adequately treated with antibiotics for at least 5 days, or
- 2) diagnosed with pertussis and not treated, cannot return before 2 weeks after coughing first began, or
- 3) return with a medical provider's note indicating they are not infectious and can return to school, or
- 4) asymptomatic for at least 24 hours (no cough for 24 hours).

Unlike influenza, presence or absence of fever cannot be used to identify infectious individuals.

2. Confirm the diagnosis of pertussis.

- Ask the child's parent/guardian for the name of the medical provider who diagnosed pertussis. Call the Health Department (831-755-4521) with the child's name, date of birth, and diagnosing provider's name. The Health Department will assist you in verifying the diagnosis.

3. Identify close contacts.

- Individuals whom meet any of the following criteria should be considered exposed:
 - Those who have had direct contact with respiratory, oral, or nasal secretions from the case.
 - Coughing or sneezing directly in the face
 - Sharing food/eating utensils
 - Kissing
 - Those who have shared a confined space in close proximity for at least 1 hour with the case (e.g., carpool).

4. Encourage pertussis vaccination.

- Immunity can wane in adolescence; therefore, anyone ≥ 10 years of age who has not received a dose of Tdap may be susceptible.

5. Follow the school's protocol for informing parents.

- Your school should have an established protocol for informing parents of possible classroom exposures. Individuals at high risk for severe pertussis and adverse outcomes include infants <6 months of age, pregnant or postpartum women, unimmunized infants and children, and immunocompromised individuals.
- Exposed close contacts should be advised to consult their private medical providers about possible exposure to pertussis.

6. Actively monitor students and staff for signs of illness.

- Close contacts should be monitored for signs and symptoms of pertussis for 21 days after the last exposure.
 - Onset of cold-like symptoms (fever may be absent or minimal) followed by coughing with increased severity
- Send symptomatic students and staff home immediately.
- Advise symptomatic individuals to consult with their medical providers.

7. Encourage proper hand and cough hygiene to limit the spread of illness.

8. Immediately report any additional suspected cases of pertussis in the same classroom/setting to the Health Department (831-755-4521).