



Waukegan Public Schools

Community Unit School District No. 60, Lake County, Illinois
Dr. Donaldo R. Batiste PH.D., Superintendent

Jack Benny Middle School

Ms. Minerva Cruz
Principal

Mrs. Catalina Quinones-Nelson
Assistant Principal

DATE: December 9th, 2011
TO: Parents/Guardians and Staff
SUBJECT: Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

A case of pertussis, also called “whooping cough” has been reported in our school. Since October 1, 2011, there have been greater than 70 cases reported in Lake County. Pertussis is caused by bacteria infecting the mouth, nose and throat. It is spread through the air by coughing.

Symptoms can appear 5 to 21 days after infection. Usually only close contacts of someone with Pertussis may become infected. Pertussis **may** start with cold-like symptoms (i.e., sneezing/runny nose) followed by a cough that can gradually become worse. Others may develop the cough without any cold symptoms at all. **Those with Pertussis are most contagious during the beginning, cold-like stage and the first 2 weeks after cough onset.** The cough usually develops into “coughing fits” which can make one gag or even vomit. **Between these “coughing fits” the person appears well.** Coughing in very young children may produce a whooping sound due to trying to catch their breaths (rare in older children). There is generally no fever and coughing may last four weeks or longer. **Adults, teens and vaccinated children often have milder symptoms** that may be confused with bronchitis or asthma. **Please observe your child for the above symptoms for the next 3 weeks.**

If your child comes down with cold symptoms followed by a cough, **it may be necessary to have your child evaluated by a physician.** Tell the doctor that pertussis has been reported in your child’s school and report possible pertussis infections to your school nurse or administration. If your child was seen by a medical provider **and** Pertussis was suspected, **please keep your child at home for the first 5 days of the appropriate antibiotic treatment, or until test results are known.** The most accurate test for diagnosing pertussis is a swab placed through the nose called a nasopharyngeal swab. **Antibiotics given early may minimize severe symptoms and prevent further spread of the disease.**

In Illinois, the “Dtap” Pertussis vaccine is given until 7 years of age. Vaccine protection begins to fade in older children. If you have children less than 7 years old who have not been completely vaccinated for pertussis (particularly babies under one year of age), talk to your child’s doctor about the benefit of vaccination. Make sure children receive their pertussis (**Dtap**) **booster** as soon as they **turn 4 years old.** Babies under one year of age and unvaccinated small children are more likely to have severe illness from Pertussis. When possible, babies should be kept away from people with a cough. **Any baby with a coughing illness should be seen by their doctor as soon as possible.**

THE PERTUSSIS BOOSTER “Tdap” (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis) is now available and WILL BE REQUIRED AT THE START OF THE 2012/2013 SCHOOL YEAR FOR CHILDREN ENTERING GRADES 6-12. It is strongly recommended that you contact your child’s doctor now to obtain this immunization for your child. As always, please submit paperwork to the School Nurse documenting their protection once it is obtained. Thank you.

Minerva Cruz
Principal