

## Memorandum

To: Parents/guardians of children attending Harriet Beecher Stowe School

From: Paul Austin, Brunswick School Department Director of Student Services and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)

Subject: Pertussis

Date: June 12, 2015

The Brunswick School Department has confirmed that there has been one case of pertussis (whooping cough) diagnosed at the Harriet Beecher Stowe School. Although additional cases have not been reported to the Maine CDC, we wanted to make you aware and provide you with this information on prevention.

Pertussis is an illness that is spread from one person to another through coughing. Pertussis usually begins with symptoms of a common cold (sore throat, running nose, etc.) and often develops into a bad cough after a few weeks. The cough can last for several weeks or more. Most children are vaccinated against pertussis, but it is still possible for vaccinated children to be infected. Babies are most at risk of serious illness.

To prevent the spread of pertussis in your community, we are making the following recommendations:

1. Please check with your medical provider to be sure you and your child are up-to-date on pertussis vaccine. Most children have had vaccine before the age of 7 years old, but their immunity to the disease may gradually wane over time. Booster shots (Tdap) are now recommended for children 11-18 years old. A single Tdap shot is also recommended for adults, especially adults who have contact with infants and young children.
2. Parents who suspect their child might have pertussis (having symptoms including severe cough or cough that lasts longer than 2 weeks) should talk with their child's healthcare provider about getting tested for pertussis. Test results take a few days to get back from the laboratory. People who are not sick do not need to get tested for pertussis.
3. People diagnosed with pertussis are treated with 5 days of antibiotics and **should stay home from school, daycare, work, and all social activities until they have finished 5 days of medicine.** Antibiotics may also be recommended for close contacts of pertussis cases, especially if infants or those with a weakened immune system may be exposed.

If you have additional questions, please contact Linda Morris, School Nurse for Harriet Beecher Stowe School at 319-1960, or the Maine Center for Disease Control at 1-800-821-5821.