



Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada



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February 16, 2023

Re: Pertussis (whooping cough) in Southern Alberta

TO: Community Members

This letter is to notify and alert you of important steps to prevent cases and spread of pertussis (whooping cough). There have been recent cases of whooping cough circulating in southern Alberta. Whooping cough is a **vaccine-preventable disease** and there is an effective antibiotic treatment available with a doctor's prescription.

Infants less than one year of age and pregnant women in their last trimester are most vulnerable to complications if they get whooping cough. Infants may not present with typical symptoms listed below, so it is important to be alert for any changes in an infant's normal behaviour.

Immunization is the best method to protect against and limit the spread of whooping cough, along with regular hand washing and remembering not to share drinks, food, or cutlery. Whooping cough immunization is safe and effective in preventing severe illness. In Saskatchewan, the vaccine is offered at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months and 18 months of age and at 4 to 6 years of age, with one booster dose offered in Grade 8 and also to adults who have not had a whooping cough booster in adulthood. **People who are in their third trimester of pregnancy should receive one dose of Tdap between 27-32 weeks gestation, with each pregnancy.**

Please visit your Community Health Nurse to get immunized and/or ensure your immunizations are up to date. They will be able to answer any question or concerns related to immunizations.

Be alert to symptoms of whooping cough. Whooping cough starts with a cough, fever and runny nose (cold-like), then progresses to more severe symptoms like gagging/vomiting and difficulty breathing. **Children and Adults with these symptoms should remain at home to prevent the spread of infection.** Anyone with symptoms should be encouraged to seek medical attention. Please notify your Community Health Nurse if you have any concerns or appear to have symptoms consistent with whooping cough.

Thank you for your attention to this important health matter.

Kind Regards,

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