

STATE OF NEVADA

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April 16, 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have been exposed to pertussis (whooping cough). There has been a laboratory confirmed case of pertussis identified at Rosemary Clarke Middle School. Pertussis is an infection that affects the airways, and it can easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Pertussis can cause a severe cough that lasts for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits and/or vomiting. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be very dangerous for babies and people with weakened immune systems. Family members with pertussis, especially siblings and parents, can spread pertussis to babies.

Recommendations:

1. If your child has a cough:
 - Keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports or play groups. See items 4 and 5 about when your child can return to these activities.
 - Make an appointment with your child's doctor as soon as possible and tell the doctor that your child may have been exposed to pertussis.
2. If your child has a weakened immune system, ask your child's doctor to prescribe antibiotics to your child as soon as possible to prevent pertussis. Doctors should give antibiotics to a child with a weakened immune system if they may have been exposed to pertussis, even if he or she is not coughing.
3. If your child lives with any of the following people, ask your child's doctor to prescribe antibiotics as soon as possible to your child, even if he or she is not coughing:
 - A woman who is pregnant
 - A baby younger than 12 months old
 - Anyone with a weakened immune system
4. If your child has been diagnosed with pertussis by his or her doctor:
 - Tell the school that a doctor diagnosed your child with pertussis.
 - School officials may request that you keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports or play groups, until your child has been on antibiotics for five days to treat pertussis.
 - Ask your child's doctor for a note that states your child has pertussis.
5. If your child's doctor says your child does NOT have pertussis:
 - Ask for a note from the doctor telling the school that your child's cough is NOT pertussis and that your child can return to school and other activities at any time.

Please make sure your family's vaccinations are up-to-date. Protection against pertussis from the childhood vaccine, DTaP, decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, should get a pertussis booster shot called "Tdap" to help protect themselves and babies near or around them. If you need Tdap, contact your doctor or your local Community Health Nurse.

If you bring your child to a doctor for pertussis, please show the additional letter (attached) to him or her. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at 775-684-5911.

Sincerely,

Melissa Peek - Bullock

Melissa Peek-Bullock
State Epidemiologist