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## Parents urged to vaccinate children against pertussis (whooping cough)

ITHACA/STANTON~ Due to the presence of pertussis, the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) is urging parents to make sure their children are up-to-date on their immunizations.

“Three cases of pertussis, or whooping cough, have been identified in Gratiot County and six cases have been identified in Montcalm County in the past three months,” said Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director for MMDHD. “It is extremely important that children are immunized to help stop the spread of illness.”

Pertussis is a contagious respiratory illness that starts like a cold with a runny nose and sore throat. After 7 – 10 days the cold turns into a cough that gradually worsens and could last up to two months.

People who have a persistent cough and are linked to a confirmed case of pertussis should contact their family doctor. “If treated early the duration and severity of symptoms can be reduced,” Graham noted.

The treatment for pertussis is a course of antibiotics. People are usually not contagious after taking antibiotics for five days. There is also a new vaccine for adolescents and adults for the prevention of pertussis.

Pertussis is especially dangerous to children under one year of age. Five percent of people who develop pertussis will develop a secondary case of bacterial pneumonia and twelve percent of children under the age of six months will develop bacterial pneumonia.

MMDHD also advises:

- See your family doctor if you have a cold that has lasted for more than one week
- Stay home from work or daycare if you are coughing
- If your doctor prescribes antibiotics for your condition take all the medication as directed
- Make sure your children are vaccinated against whooping cough
- Stop smoking, drink eight glasses of water a day, get 8 hours of sleep, and take a multiple vitamin
- Wash your hands frequently, carry a waterless hand sanitizer and use it after being in public

If your child needs a pertussis vaccination, please contact your health care provider to make an appointment.

MMDHD also offers immunizations for those on Medicaid as well as those without insurance. Please call MMDHD at 989-875-1019 in Gratiot County for more information or 989-831-3615 in Montcalm County for more information.

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.*

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