



## Cases of Whooping Cough Increase in El Paso - Health Department Stresses the need for Pertussis Vaccination

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The City of El Paso Department of Public Health announced today that over the past seven weeks, five cases of pertussis (commonly referred to as whooping cough) were reported in our area. A total of six cases were reported in all of 2011, and eight were reported in 2010. This high number of cases has local officials strongly urging parents and family members to follow immunization recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"Vaccination is the most important way to prevent the spread of pertussis, and it is also critical to complete the series of five shots," said Fernando Gonzalez, Lead Epidemiologist for the Department.

The first three shots are given at two, four, and six months of age. The fourth shot is given between 15 and 18 months of age, and a fifth shot is given before a child enters school, at four to six years of age. It is also recommended that adults and adolescents receive the vaccine, as well as a new form of the vaccine that contains protection against pertussis, tetanus, and diphtheria.

It is also important for everyone in a family be vaccinated when a newborn is brought into a household, including parents, grandparents, and everyone who will take care of the baby or who is in close contact with the newborn. Parents can also help protect infants by keeping them away from anyone who has cold symptoms or is coughing.

Pertussis is a respiratory illness that is a very contagious and caused by a bacteria. It can cause violent and rapid coughing until the air is gone from the lungs and you are forced to inhale with a loud "whooping" sound. This extreme coughing can cause you to throw up and be very tired.

The "whoop" is often not there and the infection is generally milder (less severe) in teens and adults, especially those who have been vaccinated.

Early symptoms can last for 1 to 2 weeks and usually include:

- Runny nose
- Low-grade fever (generally minimal throughout the course of the disease)
- Mild, occasional cough
- Apnea—a pause in breathing (in infants)

The City of El Paso Department of Public Health's Immunization Program offers the DTaP (for infants and children) and Tdap (for pre-teens, teens and adult) vaccines, which protect from pertussis as well as tetanus, and diphtheria at its five clinic locations across the city. Please note that clients must be uninsured and meet eligibility requirements. The cost is either \$10.00 for one vaccine or \$20.00 if the client is receiving more than one vaccine during their visit. For more information on the Immunization Program please visit: <http://www.elpasotexas.gov/health/immunization.asp>

Or call (915) 771-5740. For more information on pertussis visit the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/index.html>.

**Pertussis (*Bordetella pertussis*) (Whooping Cough) 2010 Case Definition - CSTE Position Statement Number: 09-ID-51**

### Case classification

**Probable:** In the absence of a more likely diagnosis, a cough illness lasting  $\geq 2$  weeks, with at least one of the following symptoms:

- paroxysms of coughing;
- inspiratory "whoop"; or
- post-tussive vomiting; AND
- absence of laboratory confirmation; and
- no epidemiologic linkage to a laboratory-confirmed case of pertussis.

### Confirmed:

- Acute cough illness of any duration, with isolation of *B. pertussis* from a clinical specimen;

### OR

- Cough illness lasting  $\geq 2$  weeks, with at least one of the following symptoms:
  - o paroxysms of coughing;
  - o inspiratory "whoop"; or
  - o post-tussive vomiting; AND
  - o polymerase chain reaction (PCR) positive for pertussis;

### OR

- Cough illness lasting  $\geq 2$  weeks, with at least one of the following symptoms:
  - o paroxysms of coughing;
  - o inspiratory "whoop"; or
  - o post-tussive vomiting; AND, contact with a laboratory-confirmed case of pertussis.

### Comment

The clinical case definition above is appropriate for endemic or sporadic cases. In outbreak settings, a case may be defined as a cough illness lasting at least 2 weeks (as reported by a health professional).

### See also:

- [1997 Case Definition \(revised\)](#)
- [1997 Case Definition \(original\)](#)
- [1996 Case Definition](#)
- [1995 Case Definition](#)
- [1990 Case Definition](#)

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