

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PERTUSSIS (WHOOPING COUGH) CASES ON THE RISE PROTECT YOURSELF AND VULNERABLE INFANTS — GET VACCINATED

STOCKTON (June 2, 2014) – In recent months, cases of pertussis, also known as whooping cough, have increased significantly statewide, including in San Joaquin County (SJC). "This is a vaccine-preventable disease. Immunization is a key part of preventing the spread of pertussis," said San Joaquin County Public Health Officer, Dr. Alvaro Garza. Pertussis vaccines are recommended for all children and adults.

In San Joaquin County, as of May 28, 2014, Public Health Services (PHS) has received 54 reports of pertussis. Of these reports, 41 cases have been confirmed and 13 are still under investigation. This compares with a total of 27 pertussis cases for all of 2013. Public Health officials are concerned that 2014 could break records for pertussis. Over the last 15 years in SJC, only year 2010 had more total pertussis cases than what has been reported to date in 2014. Most of the SJC pertussis cases this year are in the southern part of the county, with a high percentage of school-age children being affected.

Statewide, the disease has reached epidemic levels, according to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). As of May 28, 2014, CDPH has received reports of 2,649 cases. This number reflects more cases than were reported in all of 2013. Though the recent increase is widespread; outbreaks often occur in communities that are under-immunized for pertussis.

Infants should receive the pertussis containing vaccine, DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis), at ages 2, 4 and 6-months, and again between 15 and 18 months of age. Furthermore, children should receive a booster between 4 and 6 years of age. The pertussis vaccine is a required immunization for all California schoolchildren entering seventh grade.

Children are not the only ones that need to be immunized. For older children and adults, the vaccine is called Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis). Dr. Garza encourages everyone who is not vaccinated against pertussis to get Tdap vaccine, especially those who live or work with infants. Since infants are too young to receive the vaccine themselves, they have a higher risk of hospitalization and death due to pertussis.

"Early, short-term protection for infants is crucial," Garza said. "Because the baby won't get his or her first whooping cough shot until he or she is 2 months old, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recommends that every pregnant woman get a pertussis booster in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy. The mother's body then makes antibodies that are passed on to the baby, which provides some short-term protection early in life. In addition, it prevents the mother from catching the disease and passing it on to the baby." Mothers who do not get the vaccine in pregnancy should talk with their health care provider

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about getting the shot as soon as possible after delivery. Dr. Garza stressed that relatives and other household members who will be in close contact with the baby and have not had a pertussis (Tdap) booster, should also get one, ideally at least 2 weeks before the baby is born. In addition to the vaccinations, Garza advises parents to keep babies away from anyone who is sick, and those who are sick should stay away from any baby until they have recovered.

Pertussis is a bacterial infection of the respiratory tract that spreads easily through the air in droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms of the disease can start out “looking like” a cold because whooping cough begins with a runny nose, sneezing, and cough. The cough slowly gets worse over several weeks, and can develop into uncontrolled fits of coughing. After severe coughing spells, a person of any age may vomit or become blue in the face due to lack of air. Between spells, the person often appears to be well. This illness can last from weeks to even months. In adolescents and adults, pertussis is often a long-lasting, bothersome cough. It takes a toll on anyone, but for infants it can be deadly.

Health officials recommend that anyone who thinks they may have the symptoms to see a doctor right away. Local physicians and other health care providers are being advised by Dr. Garza to consider pertussis when evaluating patients with comparable symptoms.

For more information on getting vaccinated against pertussis, parents are urged to call their healthcare provider. Additional information can be found on the following websites:

- San Joaquin County Public Health Services (PHS) at www.sjcphs.org
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) at www.cdph.ca.gov
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.org and <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/>

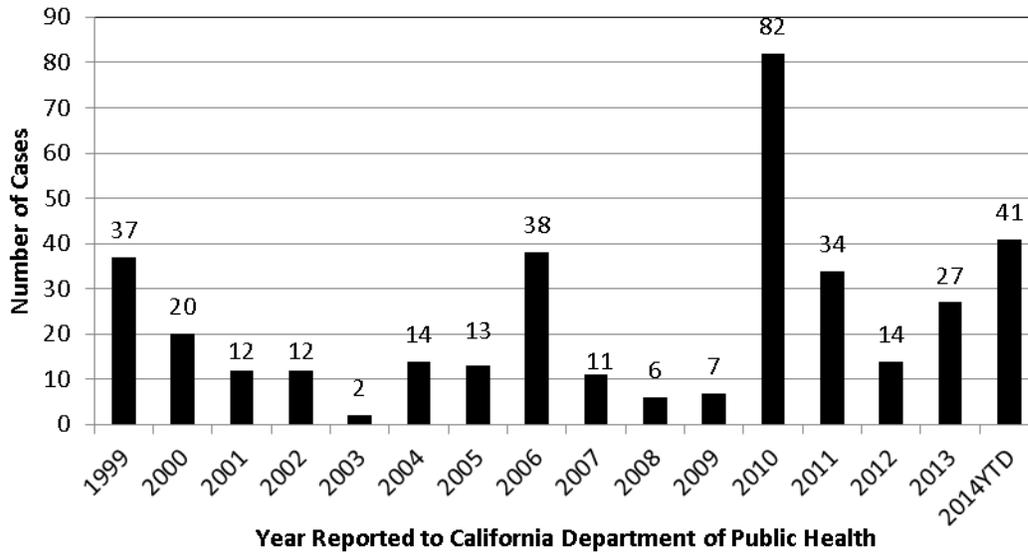
Attachments:

San Joaquin County Pertussis Data, 1999-May 28, 2014

Pertussis (whooping cough) Fact Sheet

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**Pertussis Cases
San Joaquin County, 1999 - 2014YTD***



*Year to Date as of 5/28/2014