

Date: 24 February 2015
To: Health Care Providers
From: Alvaro Garza, MD, MPH, Health Officer

**Please distribute to all
providers and relevant
medical staff in your office.**

HEALTH ADVISORY

Pertussis Death and Increase in San Joaquin County

Situation: A death from pertussis in a three-weeks old infant in the county was recently reported. The baby's mother had not been vaccinated during pregnancy. This year, as of 19 February 2015, 22 cases of pertussis have been reported in county residents (about three per week). In 2014, 215 cases were reported compared to 26 for 2013. Incidence has been higher in south county communities, particularly Manteca and Tracy. The increase is statewide, with 11,114 cases reported in 2014 to the California Department of Public Health, compared to 2537 for 2013.

Background: Pertussis infections peak in incidence every three to five years. The last peak was in 2010, so this is a new cyclical peaking. Infants too young to be fully immunized remain the most vulnerable to severe and fatal pertussis and the group we should protect the most.

Actions Requested of Clinicians:

Prevent pertussis

Vaccinate all women, irrespective of the immunization history, **with Tdap during every pregnancy** between 27 and 36 weeks gestation to optimize antibody transfer and protection of infants at birth. Advise that anyone in contact with newborns should also be up-to-date with their Tdap. Vaccinate young infants promptly with DTaP. The first dose is recommended at two months of age, but can be given as early as six weeks of age, especially to infants whose mothers did not receive Tdap during pregnancy.

Suspect pertussis

In anyone with acute cough illness, even in recently vaccinated people and regardless of age. The clinical case definition is a cough illness lasting two or more weeks with paroxysms of coughing, or inspiratory 'whoop', or post-tussive vomiting, or apnea (in infants under one year of age). These symptoms are usually much milder in older children and adults. Approximately 80-85% of vaccinees develop immunity and it wanes within a few years.

Test for pertussis

All suspected cases. Obtain a nasal aspirate or nasopharyngeal swab for PCR or culture.

Treat pertussis

Initiate antibiotic treatment prior to obtaining test results, especially in infants and pregnant women or those in close contact with them. Azithromycin is preferred because of efficacy and compliance. Provide antibiotic prophylaxis to household contacts, caregivers, and other persons who have had direct contact with respiratory, oral, or nasal secretions and aerosols from a symptomatic case, especially if there is an infant or pregnant woman in the home. Dosage and duration for antibiotic prophylaxis is the same as for treatment.

Report suspect pertussis

Cases to San Joaquin County Public Health Services by telephone (workday: 209-468-3822) or fax (209-468-8222).

Advise

Everyone of proper respiratory and hand hygiene: cover your cough, cough into your elbow, wash hands often, and stay home from school or work when ill.

Additional resources:

- California Department of Public Health: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Pertussis.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/clinical/index.html>

Attachment:

San Joaquin County Public Health Services, Pertussis Fact Sheet