



PERTUSSIS (WHOOPIING COUGH)

December 22, 2011

Dear Parent,

Another case of pertussis (whooping cough) has been confirmed in a student at Maplewood Middle School. We want to call this to your attention again and alert you to the signs and symptoms of pertussis. The disease is spread through respiratory droplets of an infected individual when they cough or sneeze.

Pertussis begins with cold-like symptoms and progresses to include a cough which worsens over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs (“coughing spasms”) followed by a whooping noise as the individual struggles to catch their breath. However, older children, adults, and very young infants may not develop the whoop. There is generally no fever. People with pertussis may have a repetitive cough so severe that it is accompanied by gagging, or vomiting. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help alleviate the cough.

If your child develops cold symptoms that include a significant, repetitive cough, please contact your physician. Tell your doctor that there has been pertussis identified in your child’s school. **If your child develops symptoms suggestive of pertussis, please keep them at HOME – no school/work or social activities (includes any holiday/family events) until pertussis disease has been ruled out by your child’s physician and/or they have completed 5 days of an appropriate antibiotic treatment.**

Pertussis is most serious in unimmunized infants and preschoolers and the elderly. If you have infants and other preschool children at home make sure they are up-to-date with their immunizations. Adults should receive one dose of a tetanus with pertussis vaccine (Tdap).

Attached for your reference is a Fact Sheet providing additional information regarding pertussis and its treatment.

If you would like more information about pertussis or have questions regarding this notice, please call the Menasha Health Department at 967-3520.