



MEDIA RELEASE

La Crosse County Experiencing Increase in Pertussis Cases

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La Crosse County is experiencing an increase in reported Pertussis cases.

According to Jaime McLean with the La Crosse County Health Department, more than 50 cases have been reported to La Crosse County Health Department since the beginning of 2024. Of those cases, 38 have been reported during the month of September. The Health Department has identified that more than two-thirds of the cases have occurred among school aged children, but infants and adults have also been affected. This increase in cases is being seen across Wisconsin and the United States.

What is it?

Pertussis, also called whooping cough, is a bacterial infection that spreads through the air on droplets of saliva. Symptoms often start like a cold with a runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever, and a slight cough. After about a week, the cough gets worse and a person may have trouble breathing, they may vomit after coughing, or they may need to take a deep breath that makes a “whoop” sound. Antibiotics are used to treat whooping cough, and early treatment is very important.

Anyone can get pertussis, but some individuals are at a higher risk for getting pertussis or having complications.

- Household Contacts
- Infants less than 12 months of age
- Pregnant women in their third trimester
- Individuals with health conditions that may be complicated by pertussis
- Anyone who may have significant contact with individuals listed above

How do I prevent it?

Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and others from whooping cough. The Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP) vaccine is given routinely to infants and children as part of the recommended immunization schedule. Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine is given to children over 7 and to adults. Check your immunization record to make sure you and your family are up to date.

What can I do?

We can help by being aware that Pertussis is occurring and by taking simple measures to prevent the spread. We can prevent pertussis by staying home when ill, covering our coughs and sneezes, and washing our hands. Talk to your healthcare provider if you were exposed to pertussis and have symptoms, or if you have concerns about an ongoing cough. If you have been prescribed an antibiotic for pertussis, stay home until you have finished taking all doses.

La Crosse County Health Department is working to prevent further spread by calling individuals with pertussis and recommending treatment and isolation per the guidelines from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

For more information, visit the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Website: [Immunizations: Whooping Cough \(Pertussis\) | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#), or contact La Crosse County Public Health Department at 608-785-9872.