



Public Health
Division

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY UPDATE

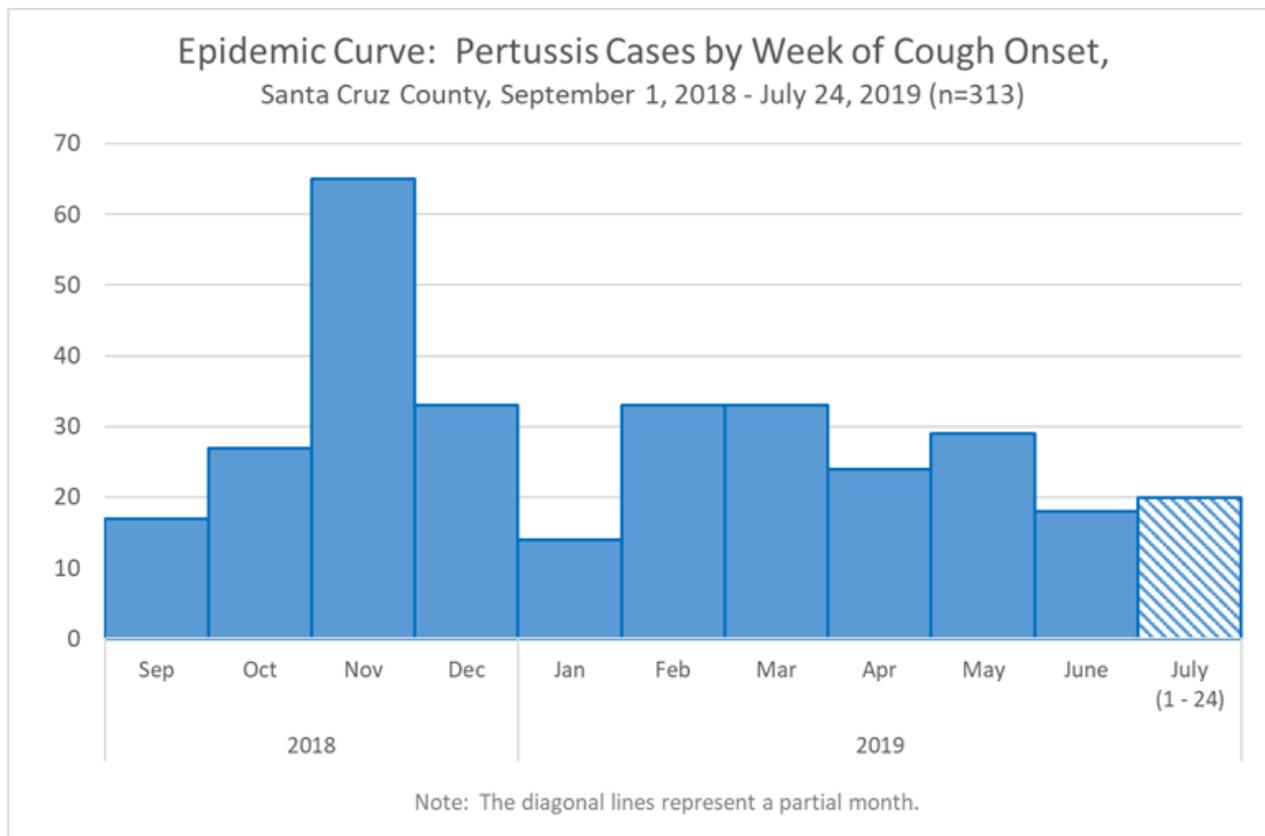
To:	All Healthcare Providers in Santa Cruz County
From:	Gail Newel, MD, MPH, County Public Health Officer
Subject:	Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Continues to Spread – Help Stop the Epidemic
Date:	7/29/2019

Current Situation: Since September 2018, 313 suspected or confirmed pertussis cases have been identified in a community-wide epidemic, with most cases associated with multiple school outbreaks. Even with the academic summer break, pertussis persists at higher than normal levels. Co-mingling during summer extracurricular activities may be contributing to the disease's persistence across the county. Public Health is asking healthcare partners to help stop this epidemic from extending into the new school year through prompt diagnosis, treatment, and education.

Recommendations: Remain vigilant in evaluating individuals of all ages for pertussis, particularly those in close contact with infants and pregnant women. Infants less than one year old are especially vulnerable as they can develop severe symptoms very quickly which can progress to death. **Early symptoms can resemble a common cold**, and therefore may be misdiagnosed. **Vaccinated individuals can get pertussis but can present with milder symptoms.** Many cases in this epidemic have been vaccinated, suggesting the vaccine's efficacy wanes.

1. **Recognize pertussis cases:** Consider pertussis in individuals with a cough illness, even in vaccinated persons. Clinical presentation can vary with pertussis. Illness is often milder in vaccinated individuals.
2. **Report all suspected and confirmed pertussis cases** to the Communicable Disease (CD) Unit via CalREDIE or by faxing a Confidential Morbidity Report to 831-454-5049. If you are testing for pertussis, report the case at that time. <http://www.santacruzhealth.org/CMRGeneral>
3. **Test for pertussis:** Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing by naso-pharyngeal swab or lavage is the preferred method. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/pertussis.aspx>
4. **Start treatment immediately if pertussis is suspected:** Do not wait for lab confirmation. Negative results do not necessarily rule out pertussis. Pertussis is very infectious and household contacts are at greater risk for infection. Prophylactic antibiotics are recommended for all close contacts. Recommended antibiotics include *azithromycin*, *clarithromycin*, or *erythromycin*.
5. **Prevent further spread** through vaccination, treatment, and isolation: Vaccinate all pregnant women during each pregnancy, preferably between 27-36 weeks of gestation. Vaccinate all children with DTaP series on time and give the Tdap vaccine to adolescents and adults. Infected individuals should isolate from all group activities (i.e. work, school, and extracurricular activities) until completing 5 days of antibiotics. If an individual declines antibiotics, isolation is indicated for 21 days after paroxysmal cough onset.

Local Pertussis Epidemiology



For more information, you and your patients can visit: <http://www.santacruzhealth.org/pertussis>

If you did not receive the previous pertussis public health advisory from 11/21/18, please contact the Public Information Officer at Corinne.Hyland@santacruzcounty.us. For further questions on pertussis, please call the CD Unit at (831) 454-4114.

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

