



Lake Pend Oreille School District #84

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Parents and Staff Members of LPOSD;

Recent information from local physicians and Panhandle Health District are calling our attention to the increase in Pertussis (Whooping Cough) in Northern Idaho. ***There is a newly diagnosed case in Bonner County.***

Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterium that is spread by coughing and sneezing or coming into close contact with someone who has the infection. Whooping cough starts like a common cold, runny nose or congestion, sneezing and a mild cough or fever. After 1 or 2 weeks the coughing becomes severe. Infants and children cough so violently and rapidly that all the air is gone from their lungs. They are forced to inhale rapidly which makes the “whooping” sound. Secondary infections of pneumonia and complications such as encephalitis or seizures can occur after a Pertussis infection.

Health officials are urging parents and school personnel to vaccinate themselves and their children to prevent a Pertussis epidemic. PHD as well as other local health clinics and physicians can advise you as to which vaccine is right for each individual. As adults are least likely to have had any kind of vaccine to protect them from Pertussis, the Tdap vaccine is being recommended. The letter T is for tetanus, a vaccine we are usually given in the ER for an injury that requires sutures. Most of us do not get the recommended 10 year booster unless there is an emergency. The recommendation is to obtain the Tetanus booster that contains Pertussis vaccine.

In the event a student or staff member has been diagnosed with Pertussis (Whooping Cough) and verified by a positive culture done by the medical provider the student or staff member will be excluded from school until 5 days of antibiotic therapy have been given and the period of communicability is past (usually 2 weeks after the onset of symptoms) When verified as positive, the parents in the classroom of that student will receive a letter stating that a student in that class is under a physicians care and will be able to return to school after 5 days of antibiotic therapy.

The incubation period is 7 to 14 days. If your child has any of the symptoms please do not send them to school. Call you medical care provider or the Panhandle Health District @ 263-5159. Make sure you tell the person you speak to that a positive case has been identified in you child’s class.

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