
SUBJECT: Update of Pertussis in the Community
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To: Primary Care Providers, Midwives, Obstetricians, Paediatricians
From: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO

There have been increased numbers of pertussis cases confirmed in our community. Currently, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health has identified 12 cases of pertussis in under vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals. Our surrounding health units, Region of Waterloo Public Health, Southwestern Public Health, and Huron Perth Public Health are also reporting significantly increased numbers of cases.

Infants under the age of 1 year, especially within the first few months of life have the most severe complications, such as pneumonia, brain infections, hospitalization, and death. Up to 80% of susceptible household contacts will develop pertussis, becoming a source of unrecognized infection for infants and young children.^{1,2} Pertussis is a highly infectious bacterial illness.

Primary Care Actions:

- Please ensure that your pregnant patients in their third trimester are immunized against pertussis as this provides the best protection for newborns.
- Vaccinate partners and other under immunized family members with pertussis vaccine to provide an additional circle of protection for newborns.
- Check your stock of pertussis swabs to ensure that you are able to do specimen collection. If you need to order swabs, use the [Requisition for Specimen Containers and Supplies](#) from PHOL.
- Ensure your office has an adequate supply of pertussis containing vaccine to be able to vaccinate both under immunized children and adults.
- Ensure that your office staff are up to date with all vaccines and especially pertussis.
- Have a high index of suspicion especially for patients from historically under vaccinated communities.

Please refer to the February 10, 2023 [Physicians Advisory - Pertussis in the Community](#) for details for specimen collection, treatment, contact management, and chemoprophylaxis recommendations.

Pertussis is a reportable disease. If you suspect a case of pertussis, please report to Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health immediately, **519-822-2715 ext. 4752**. After hours, weekends and holidays please call **1-877-884-8653**.

References:

1. CDC. Pertussis. The Pink Book. [Internet]. 2021. Available from <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/pert.html#epidemiology>.
2. NACI. An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS) National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI): Update on Pertussis Vaccination in Pregnancy.[Internet]. 2014. Available from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/update-pertussis-vaccination-pregnancy.html#epiderm>.

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