



Media Release

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Yakima Health District Provides Update on Pertussis Cases in Yakima County

Yakima, WA- The Yakima Health District is informing residents about [pertussis \(whooping cough\)](#) following confirmation of nine lab-confirmed cases in Yakima County in 2024, with three reported in the past week. Several household contacts of these cases have also reported symptoms. While this does not currently meet the threshold for an outbreak, the Health District is seeing an increase in cases and remains vigilant in closely monitoring any additional reports. Washington State has also seen an increase in pertussis cases, which is higher than typically seen at this time of year, highlighting the importance of awareness and preventive measures. While pertussis can be serious, especially for vulnerable populations, vaccination remains a highly effective tool in preventing severe outcomes. The Yakima Health District is actively working with healthcare providers and community partners to monitor the situation and ensure the health and safety of our residents.

[Pertussis](#) is a highly contagious respiratory infection. It spreads through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing and is particularly concerning for infants, young children, and individuals with weakened immune systems.

Symptoms of Pertussis

Pertussis symptoms develop in two stages:

1. Early Stage (1–2 weeks): Symptoms resemble a common cold, including mild cough, runny nose, sneezing, and low-grade fever.
2. Later Stage: Prolonged and severe coughing fits, often accompanied by a “whooping” sound during inhalation, vomiting after coughing, or exhaustion from coughing episodes.

Recommendations

As we approach the holiday season, the Yakima Health District encourages residents to take the following precautions to prevent the spread of pertussis:

- **Ensure vaccinations are up-to-date:** Adolescents and adults should receive the Tdap booster, while children should complete the DTaP vaccine series.
- **Watch for symptoms:** Seek medical attention if you or your loved ones develop prolonged coughing fits or other signs of pertussis.
- **Stay home when feeling sick:** This is crucial to protecting your family and the community during gatherings.
- **Practice good hygiene:** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing and wash your hands frequently with soap and water.

Quote

“We urge families to stay up-to-date on their Tdap vaccinations, remain alert for symptoms of pertussis, and prioritize staying home if feeling unwell, especially as we approach the holiday season. The Yakima Health District will continue keeping a close eye on the situation and work with healthcare providers and community partners to support the health and safety of our community.” – Melissa Sixberry, Director of Disease Control, Yakima Health District

Additional Information

[Whooping Cough | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions About Whooping Cough | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Whooping Cough is Serious | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Washington State Sees Steep Increase in Whooping Cough Cases | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Symptoms of Whooping Cough | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Whooping Cough Vaccination | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

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