



Dear Parents

There is an unconfirmed case of Pertussis (whooping cough) in one of the Year One classes. As with any illness, if your child is unwell, it is important to keep them home so as to avoid the spread of infection. If you suspect your child has whooping cough make an appointment to see your doctor. The following information has been taken from the Health Department website

http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/2/274/2/pertussis_whooping_cough_fact_sheets.pm

What is Pertussis/whooping cough?

Is a disease caused by infection of the respiratory tract with the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*.

What are the symptoms?

- Pertussis usually begins just like a cold, with a runny nose, tiredness and sometimes a mild fever.
- Coughing then develops, which may occur in bouts, sometimes followed by a deep gasp (or “whoop”), especially in unvaccinated children. People may vomit after a bout of coughing.
- Pertussis can be very serious in young children, especially those under 6 months of age. Complications can include pneumonia, brain damage from lack of oxygen suffered during bouts of coughing, and death.
- Older children and adults tend to have a less serious illness, but they can still have persistent coughing that may continue for several weeks, regardless of treatment.

How is it spread?

Pertussis is spread to other people by droplets from coughing or sneezing. Untreated, a person with pertussis can spread it to other people for up to three weeks after onset of cough. The time between exposure and getting sick is usually seven to ten days, but can be up to three weeks.

How is it prevented?

Make sure children are up-to-date with their pertussis vaccines.

How is it treated?

A recommended antibiotic – generally azithromycin for 5 days, or erythromycin or clarithromycin for 7 days - is used to treat pertussis. These antibiotics can prevent the spread of the infection to other people. People often continue coughing for many weeks irrespective of treatment, but they are no longer infectious after completing a five day course of antibiotics, or after 21 days if untreated

Regards

Carolyn Press
Principal
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