



# Evergreen Elementary School

98 Kagey Road  
Collegeville, PA 19426

Kimberly I. Minor  
Principal

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April 27, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

A student in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and a student in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Evergreen Elementary were diagnosed with laboratory-confirmed **Pertussis** (whooping cough). Your child may have been exposed. It was reported to the Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) on Monday, April 27, 2009 and they provided the following information and recommendations.

The whooping cough, caused by a bacterium, occurs mostly in children less than five years old. The disease can be serious in children up to seven years of age and in those who are not or incompletely immunized against the disease. Bacteria are spread by inhaling infected droplets of a coughing or sneezing **infected** child or by **direct** contact with discharges from a running nose. Household members and "close" contacts sharing the same classroom as the infected child are at increased risk.

The Montgomery County Health Department, in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Health, is recommending all students be:

- 1.) Observed over the next 2 weeks for any symptoms such as a running nose, a sudden, uncontrollable bursts or spells of coughing that persists and sometimes causes vomiting. Report these symptoms immediately to your pediatrician for evaluation.
- 2.) All ill children should be seen by a pediatrician for evaluation including a **nasopharyngeal culture** for Pertussis.
- 3.) If your child comes down with cold symptoms that include a cough, he/she should be evaluated by his/her physician. Children with pertussis, if their medical condition allows, may return to school (5) days after starting the antibiotics and must continue taking the antibiotics until completed.

It is also recommended that parents of all students:

Check the vaccination status of your child. If your child has not received the full-recommended vaccination series (DTaP at 2,4 and 6 months, first booster at 15-18 months and second booster at 4-6 years), and is under the age of 7 years, please contact your pediatrician and complete the vaccination schedule. Vaccination is not recommended for individuals greater than or equal to 7 years of age.

Infants under one year, and particularly under six months, are most likely to experience severe illness if they develop pertussis. When possible, young infants should be **kept away from people with a cough**.

**Infants with any coughing illness should be promptly evaluated by their pediatrician.**

If your child is **diagnosed with pertussis, all household members and other close contacts** should also be treated with antibiotics regardless of their age or vaccination status. Contacts between the ages of 11 and 64 years may be given the recently licensed Tdap vaccine (**Adacel<sup>™</sup> sanofi pasteur**). Although a five year interval between Td and Tdap is encouraged to reduce the risk of local or systemic reactions, intervals shorter than five years can be used. The benefits of protection from pertussis generally outweigh the risk of local or systemic reactions in settings with increased risk from pertussis (e.g., pertussis outbreaks and close contact with infants <6 months of age).

In 2005, a new combination tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis vaccine Tdap (**Adacel<sup>™</sup> sanofi pasteur**) was approved for use in adolescents and adults. Tdap is recommended for use in all 11-12 year olds and 15 year olds at high school entry. In adults under 65 years of age, Tdap should be given every 10 years to maintain immunity. There is no pertussis vaccine approved for adults aged 65 years and older.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call Montgomery County Health Department, the Division of Communicable Disease Control at (610) 278-5117.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Kim Minor  
Principal