



Sun Prairie Area
School District

Futures depend on us...every child, every day.

Pertussis Information

Pertussis is an infection of the upper respiratory tract caused by a bacteria. It often begins with cold-like symptoms, such as sneezing, runny nose and coughing. Within one to two weeks, the cough often gets much worse. Sometimes the cough is so severe that it causes vomiting with the coughing episodes. Following the cough, the person may make a loud crowing or “whooping” sound as they struggle to inhale air. The severe coughing spells can last from several weeks to two months or longer. In older children, adolescents, and adults the symptoms are usually milder and without the typical “whoop.” **Please see the attached chart for more guidance.**

Even if your child was immunized against pertussis as an infant or young child, the protective effects of this immunization may have decreased and your child may still be susceptible to pertussis infection. Pertussis can be very serious in infants and in people whose immune systems are weaker. These people, if known to be exposed and coughing now, can become severely ill. A call to their health care provider is appropriate and treatment may be given as a precaution.

Pertussis is spread through contact with the respiratory droplets from an infected person through coughing. Please maintain and encourage good hand washing and monitor the health of those in your household. **If your child develops cold symptoms that include a persistent cough, talk to your health care provider. If, at that time, your health care provider recommends that your child be tested for pertussis, please notify the school.**

Please know that anyone who is tested for pertussis will need to be isolated from school until they have received 5 days of antibiotic treatment or the test comes back negative. Test results may take 3-5 days depending on your clinic. **Your student must be out of school until the test results are back.** Please make sure to ask your clinic about expected time for test results.

It would also be a good time to check to see that the immunizations of your household members are up-to-date to give your family added protection against illness in the future.

For more information the following websites may be helpful:

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/pertussis.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/>

If you have any questions, please contact a District Nurse or the Health Assistant at your school.

Thank you and stay well,

Elizabeth Feisthommel and Debbie Brown

District Health Nurses

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Seasonal influenza (Flu)

Is it a cold, flu, or pertussis?

The Myth of the "Stomach Flu"

Many people use the term "stomach flu" to describe illnesses with nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. These symptoms can be caused by many different viruses, bacteria, or even parasites. The "flu" is a term that generally refers to influenza. While vomiting, diarrhea, and being nauseous or "sick to your stomach" can sometimes be related to the flu — particularly in children — these problems are rarely the main symptoms of influenza. The flu is a respiratory disease and not a stomach or intestinal disease.

Is it a Cold, Flu or Pertussis?

Colds, flu and Pertussis are highly contagious and, in the initial stages, might seem alike. Check the following table for a comparison of the symptoms for each illness.

Symptom		Influenza ("Flu")	Cold (Viral URI)	Pertussis
Fever		Usually present and high (102-104°F or 39-40°C); typically lasts 3-4 days	Uncommon	Uncommon If present, typically low-grade
Headache		Very common	Uncommon	Uncommon
Aches and pains, muscle aches, chest discomfort		Common, Often severe	Slight to Moderate	Uncommon
Fatigue and weakness		Moderate - severe; can last up to 14-21 days	Mild	Mild to moderate
Extreme exhaustion		Very common early in illness	Extremely Rare	Rare
Stuffy or runny nose		Sometimes	Common	Common, early in the disease
Sneezing		Sometimes	Common	Common, early in the disease
Sore throat		Sometimes	Common	Uncommon
C O U G H	Character	Non-productive ("dry") cough is typical; nocturnal cough rare	Hacking cough, often productive; nocturnal cough rare; usually responds to cough medications	Variable character; fits / paroxysms and nocturnal cough are common; generally not responsive to cough medications
	Severity	Moderate	Mild to Moderate	Variable; can be mild in adults and very severe in infants and young children
	Duration	Typically 3-7 days; occasionally to 14 days	Typically 3-7 days	Persistent cough, almost always >1week, usually 2-6 weeks, sometimes 10+ weeks
	Paroxysms	Uncommon	Rare	Common
Infectious Period		1-2 days before symptom onset to 5-10 days after	Variable; typically 4-7 days after symptom onset; can be longer	From start of catarrhal phase (before cough) to 21 days after cough onset*

*or until taking 5 days of appropriate anti-pertussis antibiotics, or until a nasopharyngeal pertussis PCR is negative, whichever occurs first.