



Vilas County Public Health Department

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Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Our community has seen an increase in the respiratory disease pertussis (whooping cough). Vilas County Public Health Department (VCPHD) would like to ask the community for help in order to prevent the spread of whooping cough by: knowing what the signs and symptoms are; encouraging people who may have pertussis to contact their healthcare provider; being up to date on your immunizations; and to practice social distancing during the holiday season.

Social distancing measures include:

- Individuals with signs of illness should stay home and not go into the community, except to seek medical care.
- Avoid large group gatherings.
- Cancelling events that would require large groups to come together.
- If you have been in contact with someone who has pertussis avoid gathering with high risk populations: infants, the elderly, immunocompromised and pregnant women.

Individuals with Pertussis may:

- Begin with cold-like symptoms: a runny nose, possible low-grade fever, and a mild cough.
- After 1-2 weeks, the illness progresses to spells of explosive coughing that can interrupt breathing and sleeping.
- Make sounds as they struggle to inhale air (hence the name "whooping cough").
- Gag or vomit from coughing.
- Experience severe coughing spells for several weeks or months.
- Vaccinated individuals symptoms may be milder and without the typical "whoop".

If you, or your family, develop symptoms, contact your healthcare provider for testing and treatment. Make sure that you and your family are up-to-date on pertussis vaccinations by checking with your healthcare provider or the Vilas County Public Health Department at 715.479.3656.

To prevent the spread of illness: Wash hands often. Cover your cough. Stay home when sick.