

No Known Exposure to Pertussis

Recorded Information Line Option 3

You are concerned about your family member becoming infected with pertussis but to your knowledge your family member has not been exposed to a confirmed case of pertussis.

You do not need to do anything unless you or your family member develops symptoms.

The illness can begin with cold symptoms, such as a runny nose and a cough, which becomes much worse over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs (“coughing fits”) followed by a whooping noise. However, older children, adults and very young infants may not develop the whoop. There is generally only a slight fever. People with pertussis may have a series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help alleviate the cough.

If your child comes down with cold symptoms that include a cough, talk to your doctor without delay. Tell the doctor that pertussis has been diagnosed in other people in Broome County. Your doctor may prescribe antibiotics to help the person with symptoms to get well more quickly and lower the chances of spreading the disease to others.

If your doctor suspects pertussis the ill family member should not participate in any group settings until the day after he or she has been on the recommended antibiotic for 5 days.

Remember, only people with symptoms can spread the illness to others.

The following good health practices will help reduce the spread of all communicable diseases in our community:

- Don't share water bottles or eating utensils
- Cover mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Practice good hand washing

For more information on pertussis, go to the Broome County Health Department website at www.gobroomecounty.com/safety and follow the links for whooping cough.

If you still have questions, contact the Broome County Health Department Monday through Friday, from 9:00 am to 4:00 p.m. at 778-2839.