

May 2, 2012

**HEALTH ALERT
FOR SOUTH MILWAUKEE MIDDLE SCHOOL FAMILIES!**

**WHOOPING COUGH
(PERTUSSIS)**

South Eastern Wisconsin is experiencing cases of Pertussis(whooping cough). The South Milwaukee Health Department is investigating a confirmed case in the South Milwaukee Middle School. There is a possibility that your child may have been exposed. We want to alert you to the signs and symptoms of Pertussis and what to do if you suspect your child has Pertussis. Please monitor your child for signs and symptoms for the remainder of the school year.

Pertussis is a bacterial disease that is spread through the air by direct, prolonged face to face contact with a person who has Pertussis.

To help prevent further spread of the disease, it is important that you **not** send your child to school if he or she has any of the signs or symptoms of Pertussis as follows: Pertussis begins with cold like symptoms and a cough that becomes much worse over a period of 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 no fever. People with pertussis may have a series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching their breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help alleviate the cough.

Children suspected of having Pertussis will be sent home from school. Children with suspected Pertussis should be tested, treated with appropriate antibiotics and isolated until at least 5 days of antibiotic treatment have been completed. All suspect and confirmed cases of Pertussis will be immediately reported to your local health department. We understand that keeping children home from school is not always easy, but this is the most effective way to help stop the spread of the disease.

Pertussis is most serious in infants and preschoolers who are not up to date on their Pertussis containing vaccine. Most students in middle school have received "Tdap" a pertussis containing vaccine as required by the Wisconsin Immunization Law. If you or anyone in your household is not vaccinated, contact your local health department.

Please contact the South Milwaukee Health Department at 414-768-8055 if you have questions. Thank you for your cooperation