



## GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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### Update on Pertussis Outbreak

**Contact Mike Lahey: 995-6010**

**Greetings of the Season- the infectious disease season that is!** We have reached a new milestone today- 70 pertussis cases in Grand Traverse County and 14 parapertussis cases as well. There are now 19 schools in the county with students ill from these diseases... in addition to influenza, which has hit the area hard recently, and the normal winter viral bugs that circulate. There are many more northern Michigan counties who now have Pertussis cases as well. **Our hotline has been busy, with over 3750 calls to date (and counting)!**

With the holiday's approaching and many people planning travel or family get-togethers, it is important that both children and adults are up-to-date on their immunizations. Booster shots for pertussis are critical because, unlike some other vaccine-preventable diseases, neither the pertussis disease nor vaccine confers lifelong immunity. Vaccination is still the best defense against this potentially fatal disease.

"Preventing severe disease and death in infants is our highest priority," says Health Officer Wendy Trute. "We urge all pregnant women to get vaccinated. We also urge parents to vaccinate infants as soon as possible."

**Infants too young to be fully immunized remain most vulnerable to severe and fatal cases of pertussis.** It is important for all close contacts of newborns and infants to be up-to-date with their pertussis vaccine, this is called cocooning. This includes mother, father, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles and any other close relative or friends who may be around an infant during the holidays.

The Tdap vaccination for pregnant women is the best way to protect infants who are too young to be vaccinated. All pregnant women should be vaccinated with Tdap in the third trimester of each pregnancy, regardless of previous Tdap vaccination. In addition, infants should be vaccinated as soon as possible. The first dose of pertussis vaccine can be given as early as 6 weeks of age.

Members of the community can also help protect themselves and prevent the spread of whooping cough (and other illnesses) by taking the following precautions:

- **Washing hands frequently and thoroughly**
- **Covering nose/mouth when coughing**
- **Staying home from work, school or events when sick, even if just a cough**
- **Contacting their health care provider if they have a prolonged or severe cough**
- **Getting up-to-date on their whooping cough vaccination**