

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Increased risk of pertussis

Manitoba Health has declared a pertussis (whooping cough) outbreak in the Southern Health region. This year, 154 cases of pertussis have been reported to Manitoba Health, mostly in children zero to nine years of age. Due to this ongoing activity in Manitoba and increased travel in the summer, there is an increased risk of pertussis cases in northwestern Ontario.

Pertussis spreads easily through droplets in the air when a person who has it coughs or sneezes. The most common symptom of pertussis is severe coughing, and although it can affect people of any age, infants under one year old are at greatest risk of serious complications including pneumonia, brain damage/disease, seizures, and death.

“The pertussis vaccine helps your body to fight the disease and prevents spreading it to others. Now is the time to protect yourself and each other,” says Sandra Krikke, Infectious Diseases Program Specialist at Northwestern Health Unit.

Things you can do include:

- Get vaccinated! Call your health care provider or your [local NWHU office](#) to book an appointment. Those eligible for a pertussis vaccine include:
 - Infants at 2, 4, 6 & 18 months of age
 - Children between the ages of 4 – 6 years
 - Most youth between 14 -16 years
 - Pregnant individuals (during each pregnancy)
 - Adults aged 18 and over who have not received a dose in adulthood
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid contact with babies if you are not up to date on your vaccinations.
- Tell your health care provider about any travel or exposure to someone with pertussis when seeking care.

For more information on symptoms and what a pertussis cough sounds like visit [Health Canada's page on pertussis / whooping cough](#).

-30-

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