

July 5, 2023

## Public Health Alert – Pertussis outbreak declared by Manitoba Health

### Situation

Manitoba Health has declared a pertussis outbreak in the region of Southern Health-Santé Sud. Between January to June 23, 2023, 152 of 154 confirmed or probable cases reported to Manitoba Health have been from the Southern Health-Santé Sud region. Most cases (110/152) are in children aged zero to nine.

The last reported case of pertussis in the NWHU catchment area was in March 2023. With summer travel season upon us and ongoing activity in Manitoba, **there is an increased risk of pertussis cases in northwestern Ontario.**

We must remain vigilant for possible pertussis cases in our area.

### Issue

Pertussis is a bacterial infection causing severe and prolonged coughing. It can affect people of any age; however, infants one year and younger are at greater risk of serious complications including pneumonia, encephalopathy, seizures, and death.

Pertussis vaccine can reduce severity and spread of the disease, but pertussis remains an endemic disease with cyclic surges. Vaccination is important but does not rule out infection. Infection may require antibiotic treatment, which also shortens the infectious period.

### Actions

- Ask patients about their travel history to Alberta or Manitoba and known contact with pertussis during travel or at home.
- Report to Northwestern Health Unit when you suspect or confirm any [Disease of Public Health Significance](#).
- Follow current testing guidance [Test Information Index | Public Health Ontario](#). Laboratory testing, using nasopharyngeal swabs, should only be performed on patients with appropriate clinical signs and symptoms.
- Counsel those with pertussis to stay home until well, practice respiratory etiquette, and avoid contact with young children, infants, and women in their third trimester of pregnancy until 5 days of antibiotic treatment is completed, or 21 days after symptom onset if untreated.



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- Promote routine vaccination with a pertussis containing vaccine. This includes:
  - Infants and children at 2, 4, 6, 18 months of age and those 4-6 years of age
  - Pregnant people, in every pregnancy regardless of previous doses
  - Youth 14 – 16 years of age (10 years after their 4-6 year booster)
  - Adults 18 and older who have not had a Tdap booster in adulthood

### **Contact**

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