



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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FIRST WHOOPING COUGH CASES REPORTED FOR 2012 *Vaccinations Recommended to Protect Children*

Three whooping cough cases have been reported for San Diego County in 2012 though none of them were reported in a school or public setting where others may have been exposed, County Health and Human Services Agency officials said today.

The case count for whooping cough, also known as pertussis, increased to 436 for the region in 2011. Among the 2011 cases is a 2-year-old, who was up-to-date with immunizations and attends All Saints Lutheran Church Preschool in University City. The case is included in the 2011 count because the child reported symptoms for the disease in December.

A record 1,144 cases, which included two infant deaths, were reported in San Diego County during the 2010 epidemic. There were no deaths from pertussis reported in California in 2011.

“We want to remind parents that the pertussis vaccine series and booster shot are important in the prevention of this very contagious respiratory illness,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. “Despite being vaccinated, about 20 percent of the population can still contract pertussis, but the upside to that is the symptoms are less severe for those who have been vaccinated compared to those who have not had any vaccinations.”

Parents can obtain the vaccine series and the Tdap booster shot for their children through their primary care physician. Students who are not covered by a medical insurance plan can get the shot from a local retail pharmacy for a fee, or from a County Public Health Center.

A typical case of pertussis starts with a cough and runny nose for one to two weeks, followed by weeks to months of rapid coughing fits that sometimes end with a whooping sound. Fever, if present, is usually mild. The disease is treatable with antibiotics.

For more information about whooping cough and ongoing vaccination clinics, call the HHSA Immunization Branch at (866) 358-2966, or visit www.sdiz.org.

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