



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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TWO ALCOTT ELEMENTARY STUDENTS DIAGNOSED WITH WHOOPING COUGH

A seven-year-old and nine-year-old who attend Alcott Elementary School in the San Diego Unified School District have been diagnosed with pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, according to the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). Both students were up-to-date with their immunizations.

HHSA is working closely with school officials to notify the staff and parents of all students who were potentially exposed. Notifications are also being sent to the school's Infant Toddler Program as a precaution.

Named for the "whoop" sound children and adults sometimes make when they try to breathe in during or after a severe coughing spell, whooping cough usually starts with flu-like symptoms, such as runny nose, sneezing, fever and a mild cough. These symptoms may be mild and brief, or last up to two weeks, but are often followed by severe coughing fits that may be associated with vomiting. Fever, if present, is usually mild. It is treatable with antibiotics.

Whooping cough can occur at any age, but infants and young children are at highest risk of life-threatening complications, the most common of which is pneumonia. In adolescents and adults, rib fractures and difficulty sleeping may occur.

It is recommended that children get five doses of DTaP vaccine, one dose at 2 mo., 4 mo., 6 mo., 15-18 mo., and 4-6 years of age. It is also recommended that people 11- 64 years of age receive a one-time dose of Tdap, given in place of a "tetanus booster," which is administered every 10 years.

Including the two newest cases, there have been 22 reported cases of whooping cough in San Diego County this year. There were 140 cases in 2009.

For more information about whooping cough, please call the HHSA Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661, or visit the web site at www.sdiz.org.

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