April 21, 2023

**Notice to Parents of John Davidson School**

Alberta Health Services has been made aware of **additional** confirmed cases of pertussis that were in attendance **at John Davidson School** while infectious There has been an outbreak of Whooping Cough in the South Zone affecting the communities spanning the County of Lethbridge, Coaldale, Taber, Vauxhall, Grassy Lake, Fort Macleod and Bow Island declared since January 24, 2023.

 In order to prevent spread of disease to others and to protect yourself and your family, please review the following:

**Background:** Pertussis, also known as whooping cough or the “100-day cough,” is a disease caused by bacteria that infects the lungs and airways. Pertussis causes serious coughing fits that can lead to choking or vomiting. The coughing can be so intense that a ’whooping’ sound happens when an infected person tries to catch his or her breath.

Pertussis is spread easily when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Children can also be infected by rubbing their eyes or mouth after they touch toys or objects handled by a person infected with pertussis. The pertussis-causing bacteria can live for two to five days on dry objects like clothes, glass or paper.

Pertussis can also cause pneumonia, and in rare cases, seizures, brain injury and death. In Canada, one to four deaths are related to pertussis each year. These deaths are most often in infants who are too young to be immunized or children who are not fully immunized.

Pertussis can be treated with antibiotics. Sadly, even with treatment, pertussis can be deadly.

**Prevention:** *Public health recommends that all children’s and adult’s immunizations are kept up to date. Currently in Alberta vaccination for pertussis is offered at two, four, six, and 18 months and a booster at four years and 14 years. Adults are recommended to receive a dose of Pertussis vaccine (dTaP) booster every 10 years. Pregnant mothers are also encouraged to get a dTap vaccine between 27 and 32 weeks gestation with each pregnancy, to provide protection to the baby for the first few months of life.*

**Action:**

Please observe your child for symptoms that may include a mild fever, runny nose, red watery eyes and a cough, followed by more serious coughing fits that can last for weeks or months. The coughing fits may cause difficulty breathing, choking and vomiting.

If your child develops the above symptoms and you decide to see a nurse or physician, please call the office first to advise of possible pertussis and take this letter with you.

Testing for pertussis is done by collection of a nasal swab that detects the bordetella pertussis bacteria.

If your child does not have any of the symptoms mentioned above, there is no need to see a nurse or physician for diagnosis. If you have any questions, please call Health Link Alberta at 811.

Thank you for your attention to this important health issue.

Sincerely,

Joan Smith RN BN

Communicable Disease Control Nurse *on behalf of*

Dr. Vivien Suttorp MD, MPH, CCFP, FCFP, CCPE

Medical Officer of Health, South Zone

Alberta Health Services

SOUTH ZONE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICES

COMMUNITY HEALTH SITES

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SITE | PHONE/FAX |
| Blairmore/Crowsnest Pass Community Health12501 – 20th Avenue Blairmore, AB T0K 0E0 | Ph: 403-562-5030Fax: 403-562-7379 |
| Bow Island Community HealthProvincial Building802 6 Street EBow Island, AB T0K 0G0 | Ph: 403-545-2296Fax: 403-545-6357 |
| Brooks Community Health (hospital)440 3rd Street EBrooks, AB T1R 0X8 | Ph: 403-501-3330Fax: 403-501-3323 |
| Cardston Community HealthProvincial Building576 Main Street Cardston, AB T0K OKO | Ph: 403-653-5230Fax: 403-653-2926 |
| Coaldale Community Health (hospital)2100 11th Street Coaldale, AB T1M 1L2 | Ph.: 403-345-3000Fax: 403-345-2043 |
| Fort Macleod Community Health (hospital)744 – 26th Street Fort Macleod, AB T0L OZO | Ph.: 403-553-5351Fax: 403-553-2333 |
| Lethbridge Community Health/Train Station801 – 1st Avenue SouthLethbridge, AB T1J 4L5 | Ph. Main: 403-388-6666Fax Main: 403-328-5934 |
| Magrath Community Health37 E 2 Ave N Magrath, AB T0K 1J0 | Ph.: 403-758-4422Fax: 403-758-3332 |
| Medicine Hat Community Health2948 Dunmore Rd SEMedicine Hat, AB T1A 8E3 | Ph: 403-502-8200Fax: 403-528-2250 |
| Milk River Community Health (hospital)517 Centre AveMilk River, AB T0K 1M0 | Ph: 403-647-3430Toll Free:1-866-642-3430Fax: 403-647-3435 |
| Oyen Community Health312 3rd Ave EOyen, AB T0J 2J0 | Ph: 403-664-3651Fax: 403-664-2934 |
| Picture Butte Community Health301 Cowan AvePicture Butte, AB T0K 1V0 | Ph: 403-388-6751Fax: 403-732-5062 |
| Pincher Creek Community Health (hospital)1222 Bev McLauchlin Dr Pincher Creek AB T0K 1W0  | Ph: 403-627-1230Fax: 403-627-5275 |
| Raymond Community Health (hospital)150 N 4th St E Raymond, AB T0K 2S0 | Ph.: 403-752-5430Fax: 403-752-4655 |
| Taber Community Health (hospital)4326 50th AveTaber, AB T1G 1N9 | Ph.: 403-223-7230Fax: 403-223-8733 |
| Vauxhall Community Health406 – 1st Ave. N. Vauxhall, AB T0K 2K0 | Ph: 403-223-7229Fax: 403-654-2134 |