

17Jan2025

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child **may** have been in contact with a case of whooping cough (pertussis) at **Meadow Ridge School** in **January 2025**. Pertussis is a contagious disease caused by bacteria. It is spread through the air when someone with pertussis coughs or sneezes. There have been more pertussis cases than usual in Calgary and surrounding communities since November 2023. Your child **may** be at higher risk of becoming sick with pertussis.

**If your child develops any of the following symptoms, please call your doctor or Health Link at 811:**

- a mild occasional cough that gradually worsens,
- a persistent cough which is worse at night,
- a cough which may be accompanied by a whooping sound when breathing in,
- coughing spells which may be followed by vomiting or gagging.

Assessment and treatment are important. The test for pertussis is a swab taken from the nose. Pertussis is treated with antibiotics. If someone is diagnosed with pertussis, *they should stay home* and not go to daycare, school, or public gatherings until:

- they have been on antibiotics for at least 5 days  
**OR**
- 3 weeks has passed from the time the cough first started, or, until the end of the cough (whichever comes first)

**If your child is healthy with no symptoms:** There is no need for a physician to assess your child or take a swab if they are not coughing.

**We strongly recommend that everyone confirm their immunizations are up to date. Please check your child's immunization record or contact Health Link at 811 if you are unsure of your child's immunization history.**

- For children, adequate immunization is three doses of pertussis vaccine before one year of age, a booster dose at 18 months and a dose between four to six years of age.
- Children will also be offered a dose of pertussis vaccine in Grade 9 at school during routine scheduled immunization rounds.
- Adults are recommended to receive a dose of Pertussis vaccine (Tdap) booster every 10 years. Pregnant mothers are also encouraged to get a Tdap vaccine between 27- and 32-week gestation *with each pregnancy*, to provide protection to the baby for the first few months of life.

You can text 'Whooping Cough' to 88111 to receive general information on whooping cough symptoms, treatment and how to prevent it from spreading. (Data charges may apply). You can also visit <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/> and search for pertussis or whooping cough.

If you have any questions, please call Health Link at 811.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richelle Schindler  
Medical Officer of Health  
Alberta Health Services - Calgary Zone