

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Melissa Propp at nurse@swhealth.ne.gov or call 308-345-4223

Whooping Cough Epidemic Reported in Colorado

McCook - Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department is sharing health risk information from Northeast Colorado Health Department which is reporting continued high rates of pertussis (whooping cough) in Colorado.

“An especially high number of cases have been reported recently throughout several counties in Colorado: Arapahoe, Boulder, Colorado, Denver and Jefferson counties,” states Melissa Propp, Public Health Nurse for SWNPHD. “With our proximity to Colorado, we encourage Nebraska residents to be aware of the whooping cough epidemic, especially as they travel to see family and friends.”

Whooping Cough starts like the common cold, with runny nose or congestion, sneezing, and may include a mild cough or fever. After one-two weeks, severe coughing begins which makes it hard to breathe. After fits of many coughs, someone with pertussis often needs to take deep breaths which create a "whooping" sound. Pertussis most commonly affects infants and young children and can be fatal, especially in babies less than 1 year of age according to the Center for Disease Control.

Vaccines are the safest and most effective way to prevent whooping cough. Pregnant women should get one dose of Tdap during their late second trimester or third trimester to provide protection for their child. Caregivers, grandparents, parents and siblings should be up to date on pertussis immunizations before having contact with an infant, as they may not now they are carriers.

If you are unsure if you need the vaccine, contact Melissa by calling 308-345-4223. SWNPHD has the Pertussis vaccine and can schedule you an appointment. Walk-ins are also welcome. We can bill Midlands Choice and Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance.

Immunizations are one of the most effective and cost efficient ways to prevent disease. For every dollar spent on immunizations, it saves as much as \$29.00 in direct and indirect health costs.

More information on immunizations is available at www.swhealth.ne.gov and you can follow us on Facebook or Twitter. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins and Red Willow counties.

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