



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Region IV Public Health**  
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties  
and Cowlitz Tribe

# Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

**Thank you**

**Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:**

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH  
**Health Officer**

Clark County Public Health  
Cowlitz County Health Department  
Skamania County Health Department  
Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services  
(360) 397-8412

**Please Distribute**

Categories of Health Alert messages:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Region IV Public Health  
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties  
and Cowlitz Tribe

## HEALTH ADVISORY

April 3, 2012

TO: Physicians and other Health Care Providers

FROM: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH, Health Officer

RE: Epidemic levels of Pertussis in Washington State

The Washington Department of Health today issued a news release (attached) describing epidemic levels of pertussis in Washington State. With this information, we are reminding health care providers to report all cases of pertussis to their local health jurisdiction. This includes lab confirmed cases as well as suspect cases in which patients are treated on the assumption they have pertussis.

### Treatment and Prophylaxis Regimens for Pertussis\*

Age group	Azithromycin	Erythromycin	Clarithromycin	TMP-SMZ
Infants aged <1 month	Recommended agent. 10 mg/kg per day orally in one dose (max 500 mg/d) for 5 days. <i>Only limited safety data available.</i>	Not preferred. Erythromycin is associated with infantile hypertrophic pyloric stenosis. Use if azithromycin is unavailable: 40--50 mg/kg per day (maximum: 2 g per day) in 4 divided doses for 14 days	Not recommended, safety data unavailable	Contraindicated for infants <2 months due to risk for kernicterus
Infants 1-5 months	10 mg/kg per day orally in one dose (max 500 mg/d) for 5 days.	40--50 mg/kg per day (maximum: 2 g per day) in 4 divided doses for 14 days	15 mg/kg per day (maximum: 1 g per day) in 2 divided doses each day for 7 days	Contraindicated for infants <2 months. For infants aged ≥2 months, TMP 8 mg/kg per day, SMP 40mg/kg per day in 2 divided doses for 14 days
Infants aged 6 months of age and older children	10 mg/kg (maximum: 500 mg) on day 1, followed by 5 mg/kg per day (maximum: 250 mg) on days 2--5	40--50 mg/kg per day (maximum: 2 g per day) in 4 divided doses for 14 days	15 mg/kg per day (maximum: 1 g per day) in 2 divided doses each day for 7 days	TMP 8 mg/kg per day, SMP 40mg/kg per day in 2 divided doses for 14 days (maximum adult dose)
Adults	500 mg in a single dose on day 1 then 250 mg per day on days 2-5.	2 g per day in 4 divided doses for 14 days.	1 g per day in 2 divided doses for 7 days. Pregnancy category C.	TMP 320 mg per day, SMZ 1,600 mg per day in 2 divided doses for 14 days. Pregnancy category C.

\*Recommended Antimicrobial Agents for the Treatment and Postexposure Prophylaxis of Pertussis 2005, CDC Guidelines: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5414a1.htm>

If you have any questions, please contact your local public health department:

- Clark County Public Health: (360) 397-8182.
- Cowlitz County Health Department: (360) 414-5599
- Skamania County Community Health: (509) 427-3850
- Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services (360) 795-6207

Thank you for your partnership.

## News Release



---

**For immediate release:** April 3, 2012

(12-038)

Contacts: Tim Church, Communications Office 360-236-4077  
Donn Moyer, Communications Office 360-236-4076

### **Whooping cough cases reach epidemic levels in much of Washington** *All teens and adults need a whooping cough booster*

**OLYMPIA** — Today Secretary of Health Mary Selecky announced that whooping cough disease has reached epidemic levels in Washington. So far in 2012, 640 cases have been reported in 23 counties as of March 31. This compares to 94 cases during this same time period last year, putting Washington on-pace to have the highest number of reported cases in decades.

“We’re very concerned about the continued rapid increase in reported cases,” said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “This disease can be very serious for young babies, who often get whooping cough from adults and other family members. We want all teens and adults who haven’t had Tdap to be vaccinated to help protect babies that are too young for the vaccine.”

Whooping cough vaccines are recommended for all children and adults. The shots children get wear off over time. Everyone age 11 and older should get a whooping cough booster, called Tdap. It’s especially important for anyone who has close contact with babies younger than 12 months to get a dose of Tdap to help protect the baby from whooping cough. This includes parents, siblings, grandparents, health care providers, and child care providers.

“Many adults don’t realize they need to be vaccinated, or they assume they have been,” said State Health Officer Dr. Maxine Hayes. “We’re asking everyone to verify with their health care provider that they’re up-to-date on vaccines. We’re also asking everyone to use good health manners — like cover your cough and stay home when you’re sick — that will also help prevent spreading whooping cough.”

[Whooping cough](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/diseases/pertussis) ([www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/diseases/pertussis](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/diseases/pertussis)), also known as pertussis, is a highly contagious respiratory illness spread by coughing and sneezing. It affects people of all ages — but is most serious in infants, especially those too young to get vaccinated or who aren’t fully protected. It causes cold-like symptoms followed by a [long, severe cough](http://www.pkids.org/diseases/pertussis.html) ([www.pkids.org/diseases/pertussis.html](http://www.pkids.org/diseases/pertussis.html)) that can last for weeks. Adolescents and adults often get a much milder case of whooping cough, but they can still spread it.

The Department of Health is introducing a new public service radio announcement this week reminding people how serious whooping cough can be and to get vaccinated. The spot features Secretary Selecky along with a Snohomish County Mom who talks about losing her newborn daughter to whooping cough. The [radio announcement is on the agency's website](#) ([www.doh.wa.gov/Newsroom/sound/DOH\\_WA\\_WhoopingCough\\_30\\_329.asx](http://www.doh.wa.gov/Newsroom/sound/DOH_WA_WhoopingCough_30_329.asx)) and will be shared with radio stations across the state.

We're working to raise awareness among health care providers about the epidemic, and providing advice on testing, who should be vaccinated, and treatment guidelines. We're also working closely with local health partners on disease tracking and monitoring to make sure we continue to have current information about the amount of disease in Washington. Weekly updates of [case counts in counties throughout the state are posted online](#) on Tuesday afternoons around three o'clock.

All recommended vaccines are offered at no cost to all kids under 19 through health care provider offices participating in the state's Childhood Vaccine Program. Health care providers may charge an office visit fee and a fee to give the vaccine, called an administration fee. People who cannot afford the administration fee can ask their regular health care provider if they'll waive that cost. Most health insurance carriers will cover the whooping cough vaccine; adults should double-check with their health plan.

More information on preventing whooping cough is available on the [Department of Health website](#) ([www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)). Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

###