



DARLING DOWNS PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Enquiries to: Public Health Nurse
Date: 27 March 2024
Phone: 07-4699 8240

Dear Parents and Staff,

PERTUSSIS ALERT

Darling Downs Public Health Unit (DDPHU) has received a notification of whooping cough (pertussis) occurring in a person attending Darren Lange Swimming Academy (Wilsonton). It is important for staff and parents to be vigilant and seek medical advice if they/ their children develop a cough.

What is pertussis?

Pertussis or whooping cough is a respiratory illness caused by the bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*. Pertussis can affect people of any age. Typically, pertussis starts like a cold with a runny nose, sneezing and tiredness over several days, and then the characteristic coughing bouts develop (paroxysmal cough). These coughing bouts can be distressing at any age but can be very serious in young infants. While the pertussis vaccination greatly reduces the risk of disease, there is still a chance a person could get pertussis even if they are fully vaccinated.

To reduce the spread of whooping cough in the community, the **DDPHU** is recommending the following:

Vaccination

Vaccination is effective in reducing the spread of pertussis in the community.

- Ensure all children are **up to date** with their immunisations including childhood and a booster dose available at Year 7
- Pregnant mothers are recommended to have **pertussis vaccine from 20 weeks**.
- There is also an adult pertussis vaccine available for staff and parents available at a cost. For more information parents and staff should consult their doctor.

Testing and Treatment

- If symptoms develop, please present to your local GP for testing and treatment.
- Antibiotics treatment for pertussis can stop the spread of infection.

Exclusion

- To help prevent the spread of illness, people who have been diagnosed with pertussis should **NOT** attend work, school or day care until they have completed the first 5 days of the recommended antibiotics
- If antibiotics cannot be taken, they must be excluded for 21 days after the onset of any cough, or 14 days after onset of a paroxysmal cough, whichever is earlier.
- If your doctor suspects that you/your child may have pertussis, it is important not to attend school or other group activities until the results become available.

Please see attached [whooping cough \(pertussis\)](#) fact sheet and [Queensland Health Time Out poster](#) for further information.

If you have any further queries, please contact the Darling Downs Public Health Unit at 07-4699 8240.

Yours sincerely,

on behalf of

Dr Priya Janagaraj
Public Health Physician
Darling Downs Public Health Unit