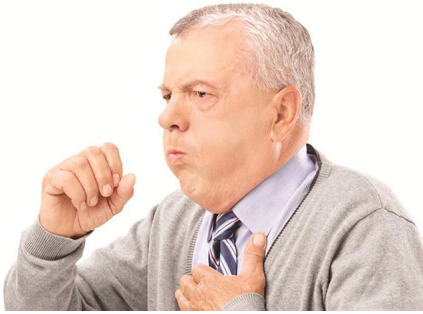# Whooping cough infections identified in McKinley County

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 23 March 2018 10:24

The New Mexico Department of Health reported March 20. a community-wide outbreak of whooping cough in McKinley County.

As of March 14, NMDOH reports eight laboratory-confirmed cases of whooping cough, and an additional 15 probable cases. These cases have primarily occurred in school-aged children and their close household contacts.

Whooping cough, also called pertussis, is a highly contagious respiratory illness that is spread by coughing and sneezing while in close contact with others. Left untreated, it can spread from a single infected person for several weeks, with people in the early stage of illness being the most contagious.

Whooping cough can be a serious illness. Symptoms usually begin appearing as cold symptoms such as a cough, runny nose, sore throat and usually little or no fever. After several days, the cough may become more severe; it may come in spasms or as a series of coughs without a chance to breathe between coughs. There may be a gasp or "whoop" and/or gagging or vomiting at the end of the coughing spasm.

Antibiotics are recommended for people within three weeks of having a cough. Residents who have recently developed a cough or those who have spent long periods of time with people with confirmed or suspected cases should consult with their healthcare provider for treatment recommendations.

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Infants, particularly those less than six months of age, who contract whooping cough are at increased risk of complications, hospitalization and death.

The following groups should be prioritized for immediate vaccination with an age-appropriate pertussis-containing vaccine:

All pregnant women during each pregnancy between the 27th and 36th weeks of pregnancy.

Anyone caring for or visiting an infant under one year of age.

All health care personnel who provide services to pregnant women and infants.

All childcare personnel who work in settings that include infants.

Visit: nmhealth.org

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