

Dear Colleague:

The purpose of this letter is to inform that your patient may have been exposed to pertussis in a local daycare facility or school and Washoe County Health District (WCHD) highly recommends that you prescribe appropriate prophylactic antibiotic to your patient.

**For Exposed Patients WITH Symptoms:**

As WCHD continues to work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we have developed the following guidelines for assessing and treating patients at this time:

**For patients coughing <21 days:**

1. Collect nasopharyngeal swabs or aspirate for pertussis PCR testing and/or culture.
2. Do not delay treatment with appropriate antibiotics while waiting for laboratory results if there is no alternative diagnosis.
3. Document and communicate all clinical decisions related to pertussis to the daycare or school (this includes children for whom pertussis has been ruled out).
4. Provide antibiotic prophylaxis for **all household members**
5. Provide antibiotic prophylaxis to pregnant women, an infant less than 12 months old, or anyone with a weakened immune system that lives in the household.

**For patients coughing ≥21 days:**

1. Testing for pertussis is not recommended. Testing after 3 weeks of cough is of limited benefit since PCR and culture are only sensitive during the first 2-3 weeks of cough when bacterial DNA is still present in the nasopharynx.
2. Treatment is no longer necessary after 21 days from cough onset, with the following exception: infants and pregnant women in their third trimester should be treated up through 6 weeks after cough onset.
3. The patient is no longer infectious and can return to daycare or school.

**For all households:** Administer Tdap vaccine to contacts 11 years and older who have not been previously vaccinated with Tdap, or refer for vaccination at Washoe County Health District Immunization Clinic by calling 775-328-2402. You can check on immunization status by visiting <https://izrecord.nv.gov>. Additional clinical and laboratory guidance may be found on the CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis>. Should you have any questions or concerns, please call Washoe County Health District Communicable Disease Program at 775-328-2447. Thank you for your support and assistance to control the pertussis spread.

Sincerely,



Randall Todd, DrPH  
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Washoe County Health District