



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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PATRICK HENRY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT DIAGNOSED WITH WHOOPING COUGH

A 15-year-old student at Patrick Henry High School in the San Diego Unified School District was the 140th case of pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, in San Diego County for 2009 according to the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). There have been no cases reported yet in 2010. There were 51 cases of whooping cough in 2008.

HHSA is working closely with school staff to notify the parents of all students who were potentially exposed at the school, which was on winter break until January 4.

Named for the "whoop" sound children and adults sometimes make when they try to breathe in during or after a severe coughing spell, whooping cough usually starts with flu-like symptoms, such as runny nose, sneezing, fever and a mild cough. These symptoms may be mild and brief, or last up to two weeks, but are often followed by severe coughing fits that may be associated with vomiting. Fever, if present, is usually mild. It is treatable with antibiotics.

Whooping cough can occur at any age, but infants and young children are at highest risk of life-threatening complications, the most common of which is pneumonia. In adolescents and adults, rib fractures and difficulty sleeping may occur.

It is recommended that children get five doses of DTaP vaccine, one dose at 2 mo., 4 mo., 6 mo., 15-18 mo., and 4-6 years of age. It is also recommended that people 11- 64 years of age receive a one-time dose of Tdap, given in place of a "tetanus booster," which is administered every 10 years.

For more information about whooping cough, please call the HHSA Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661, or visit the web site at www.sdiz.org.