



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Spring Break & Respiratory Viruses

East Wenatchee, WA – As we approach the much-anticipated Spring Break holiday, Chelan-Douglas Health District (CDHD) encourages you to help keep our community safe!

As of March 22, Chelan-Douglas Health District has identified fifty-eight (58) cases of pertussis that have been confirmed with a positive lab result or have clinical symptoms consistent with pertussis and exposure to a lab-confirmed case. Person to person spread of pertussis occurs through large respiratory droplets, and is most likely amongst people that live together or people who spend time together indoors.

[Pertussis](#) (whooping cough) is a well-known and serious respiratory illness caused by the bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*. Whooping cough spreads very easily by coughing and sneezing. It begins with cold-like symptoms and develops into a bad cough. Coughing spells can be severe, sometimes ending in gagging or vomiting. Some kids also may have a high-pitched “whoop” after they cough, which is how the disease got its common name (although infants may not cough at all, and some teens and adults don’t have a “whoop” after they cough). People that have been vaccinated for pertussis may have milder symptoms, but it is important to know that they can still get and transmit pertussis. Complications of pertussis include pneumonia, syncope (passing out), seizures, apnea (stopping breathing) and death. These severe complications are most common in infants, with half of infected infants requiring hospitalization. Pertussis infection during pregnancy can affect the fetus and result in newborn complications.

As you are traveling or playing during spring break, Chelan-Douglas Health District recommends everyone to take the following precautions to lower the chance of getting yourself and others sick:

- If you are sick, especially with a fever, stay home for 24 hours and seek healthcare evaluation if symptoms do not improve.
- Avoid visiting vulnerable individuals if you are experiencing any respiratory illness symptoms.
- If you are coughing, wear a mask when visiting a healthcare facility/provider to reduce the spread of infection.
- If you have had a known exposure to respiratory illnesses such as COVID, pertussis or the flu, wear a mask and monitor your symptoms.

We continue to recommend to the general public that individuals with the following symptoms or exposure to someone with pertussis should contact their healthcare provider:

1. Any respiratory illness with a cough:
 - greater than 2 weeks duration, or

- that is paroxysmal, or
 - includes an inspiratory whoop/gasping, or
 - has post-tussive gagging/emesis, or
 - is worse at night
2. Any respiratory symptoms that develop after known contact with a person with pertussis
 3. Known household or other close contact with a person with pertussis
 4. Exposure to pertussis and the high-risk conditions of age <1 year or pregnancy
 5. Exposure to pertussis and contact with family members or others with high-risk conditions of age <1 year or pregnancy

Chelan-Douglas Health District continues to work closely with school officials, local healthcare providers and the Washington State Department of Health to respond, monitor and assist in care of affected individuals and their families. Prevention of severe illness among those most vulnerable to pertussis and other respiratory illness remains our highest priority.

Resources:

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Washington State Department of Health](#)

For more public health updates, visit www.cdhd.wa.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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