



# Cowlitz County Health and Human Services

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## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Pertussis Reminder: Stay Safe During Holiday Gatherings

Cowlitz County Health and Human Services (CCHHS) reminds residents to remain vigilant against respiratory illnesses, like Pertussis (whooping cough), through the holiday season.

**Pertussis** is a potentially serious illness, particularly for infants and pregnant women, but can affect anyone at any age. In very young children it can lead to serious health problems, including apnea (pauses in breathing), pneumonia, syncope (fainting), seizures, and even death.

**Anyone experiencing prolonged coughing or who has been in contact with someone with Pertussis should reach out to their healthcare provider for testing or treatment to prevent further spread during the holidays.**

**Early symptoms** resemble a common cold, including runny nose, sneezing, and mild cough. Within a week, the cough can escalate into severe, prolonged coughing fits, which may cause gagging or vomiting.

**Preventative steps** can help safeguard vulnerable loved ones from Pertussis and other respiratory illnesses. **Encourage handwashing** before meals and after coughing or sneezing. Avoid sharing utensils, cups, or food. **Stay home** to protect others if you feel ill, even with mild symptoms. Ensure that you and your family are up to date on Pertussis **vaccinations** (DTaP for young children and Tdap for older children, teens, and adults). Pregnant women should consult their healthcare provider about vaccination to protect themselves and their babies.

If diagnosed, **early treatment** with antibiotics can reduce the contagious period and protect others from exposure. Antibiotics are also recommended for those who have had close contact with a confirmed case, especially in household settings.

For more information, visit the [Washington State Department of Health](http://www.wa.gov/health) website or refer to [recent health updates on pertussis activity statewide](#).

To contact Health & Human Services, please call 360-414-5599.

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