

Fair Lawn High School

Health Office

14-00 Berdan Avenue
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
201-794-5450
x1011, x1012

February 13, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

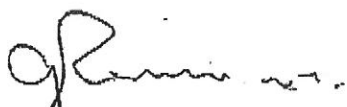
This letter is to inform you that we have had two cases of confirmed pertussis (whooping cough) identified in our school. Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by a cough or sneeze. Pertussis begins with cold symptoms and a cough, which become much worse over a 1-2 week span. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughing fits followed by whooping noise. However, older children, adults and very young infants may not develop the "whoop". There is generally only a slight fever. People with pertussis may have a series of severe coughing fits followed immediately by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching breath. The cough is often worse at night, and cough medicines usually do not help alleviate the cough.

The following are recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services:

1. Infants under one year old, especially those under six months, are most likely to have severe symptoms if they develop pertussis. When possible, young infants should be kept away from people with a cough. Infants with any coughing illness should be seen promptly by their doctor.
2. Pertussis vaccine has until recently, been given only to children under 7 years old. However, **a new adolescent and adult pertussis booster vaccine is now available for persons aged 10-64 years.** If you have children who are not immunized or who have not fully completed their immunizations against pertussis (particularly infants under one year) it is recommended you now talk to your child's doctor about the benefits of vaccination. ***It is not necessary to keep your child home from school.***
3. If your child comes down with cold symptoms that include a cough, talk to your child's doctor immediately. Tell the doctor that pertussis has been identified at your child's school.
4. It is generally recommended that those persons having close contact with a pertussis case speak with their doctor about possible prophylactic antibiotic use in order to help prevent them from getting ill.
5. Do not send your child to school if (s)he has any signs or symptoms of pertussis.
6. Children who are immunosuppressed should check with their pediatrician regarding prophylaxis.
7. Pregnant women should check with their obstetricians regarding prophylaxis and possible exposure.

If your child has been around someone with pertussis, (s)he may become sick with the disease. This is especially true if your child is not up-to-date with his/her pertussis vaccinations. If your child has been in contact with someone with pertussis, antibiotics may be prescribed by your doctor to prevent him/her from getting ill. If your child is already sick, giving antibiotics early can help him/her get well faster and lower the chances of spreading the disease to others.

We will continue to monitor the situation at school and if additional actions to control the spread of pertussis among pupils become necessary, we will again notify parents. If you have general concerns or questions about pertussis, you can contact your school nurses at the above numbers or your local health department at 201-794-5331. If you have specific concerns or questions about your child's health, please contact your health care provider.


Gary Muccino, MD


Barbara Rochford, RN


Jeanne Marotta, RN