 May 20, 2014

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Summit County Public Health

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Since May 2, 2014 there have been 4 confirmed cases of pertussis (whooping cough) identified in students who attend Coventry High School. Summit County Public Health would like to provide further information on how to prevent and control the spread of pertussis due to recent significant increases of cases of pertussis in Summit County.

Pertussis, a vaccine preventable disease, is a contagious respiratory disease caused by a bacteria Bordetella pertussis, also known as “whooping cough.” Symptoms begin as a cold with fever, runny nose and a cough that gradually becomes more severe. After 1-2 weeks the coughing episodes become frequent, persistent, and last longer. Pertussis is spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Parents and staff should observe themselves and their children for symptoms of possible pertussis:

* Coughing episodes that last greater than one week
* Coughing episodes that persist and often become more frequent and more severe
* Severe coughing episodes in which the person cannot stop
* Gagging and vomiting after coughing spells
* Coughing that is worse at night
* The person may look and feel healthy between coughing episodes

The above symptoms may differ from other respiratory illnesses. See the attached fact sheet for more information. Anyone exhibiting these symptoms should be evaluated by a health care provider for diagnosis and treatment with antibiotics. Also check with your healthcare provider to ensure that children and adults are properly vaccinated against pertussis.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Summit County Public Health Communicable Disease Unit at 330-375-2662, and ask to speak with a nurse.