



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** Guillermo Cole  
Public Information Officer  
412-578-8004  
[gcole@achd.net](mailto:gcole@achd.net)

**County Health Department Reports Growing Incidence of Pertussis**  
*Testing, Treatment & Vaccination Urged to Stop Spread of Whooping Cough*

**PITTSBURGH** – The Allegheny County Health Department today announced that a growing number of pertussis cases are being reported in the County.

From January 1 through November 30 this year, 140 confirmed or probable pertussis cases were reported to the Health Department, well above the average of 66 reported cases in that time period over the past decade. Cases range in age from 2 months to 100 years old, but over half (54%) are between the ages of 14 and 17 years. No deaths have been reported.

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious bacterial respiratory disease that can cause prolonged coughing that may make it hard to breathe. After many fits of coughing, someone with pertussis may need to take deep breaths that result in the “whooping” sound characteristic of the disease; however, adolescents, adults and very young infants may not develop the whoop. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be very dangerous for infants and people with weakened immune systems

“To prevent further transmission of the disease, we would like to remind residents of all ages, but especially school-age children, to follow proper cough etiquette and hand washing techniques. This includes coughing or sneezing into a tissue or sleeve and washing hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds,” said Health Director Dr. Karen Hacker.

Health officials also strongly recommend vaccinations for infants, young children, adolescents and adults as the best way to protect against pertussis. It’s extremely important for those who are around infants to be up to date with their pertussis vaccination, because the disease can be fatal in babies less than one year old. Pregnant women should be vaccinated during the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester.

Vaccinations are available from your health care provider and the Allegheny County Health Department. For information about the Health Department’s vaccination clinic in Oakland, please call **412-687-ACHD** or visit [www.achd.net](http://www.achd.net).

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KAREN A. HACKER, MD, MPH, DIRECTOR  
**ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT – PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE**  
955 RIVERMONT DRIVE • PITTSBURGH, PA 15207  
PHONE (412) 578-8004 • FAX (412) 578-8325 • [WWW.ACHD.NET](http://WWW.ACHD.NET)

