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### **Pertussis Alert**

**JACKSON COUNTY, MI** - Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, has been identified in Jackson and nearby counties. This highly contagious illness is caused by bacteria and spreads through direct contact or by inhaling droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze. Pertussis can be especially dangerous for babies and young children who are not fully vaccinated.

Symptoms typically appear 7-10 days after exposure, but it can take up to 3 weeks in some cases. Early signs resemble a common cold—sneezing, runny nose, mild dry cough, and a low-grade fever. After 1-2 weeks, more severe coughing fits may develop, sometimes lasting over a minute and making breathing difficult. A “whooping” sound may occur as the person tries to catch their breath, and coughing can cause gagging or vomiting, particularly at night. These coughing episodes can persist for 6 weeks or more.

Fortunately, pertussis can be treated with antibiotics. If you suspect you were exposed to pertussis, you may also receive a prophylactic dose of antibiotics to avoid becoming sick.

Thankfully, pertussis vaccines have made the disease less common, with most children receiving protection through routine vaccinations. However, immunity from the vaccine fades over time. If you or your children are over 10, a booster shot may be necessary. Having pertussis once does not provide long-term immunity, so it's important to keep vaccination records up to date.

Healthcare providers are urged to maintain vigilance in diagnosing and treating pertussis, especially in children or childcare workers who may have been exposed. Partially vaccinated children may not exhibit classic symptoms, such as the “whoop,” but can still transmit the disease. Recommended diagnostic tests include culture or PCR of a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab or aspirate.



Serology and DFA tests are not recommended. For additional information from MDHHS on recommended tests to perform, see the link below.

Please report any suspected pertussis cases to the Jackson County Health Department for investigation and classification based on national guidelines by phone at 517-768-1664.

[CDC Pertussis Page](#)

[MDHHS Pertussis Disease Investigation Guidelines](#)

