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**From the Office of Dr. Ninh Tran, Medical Officer of Health, Southwestern Public Health**

## **Pertussis Cases in Region**

With active cases of pertussis in the region, Southwestern Public Health is asking health care providers in Elgin County, Oxford County, and the City of St. Thomas to be alert to the symptoms of pertussis when diagnosing patients and to review the process for testing, reporting, and treating cases.

### **Consider Pertussis Diagnosis**

For anyone who has the following symptoms, **regardless of vaccination status**:

- A paroxysmal cough of any duration.
- A cough lasting 2 weeks or longer.
- A cough with inspiratory "whoop".
- A cough ending in vomiting or gagging.
- Apnea or cyanosis without the characteristic paroxysmal cough, especially in infants.
- A cough in a person who has been exposed to pertussis.

### **Test for Pertussis**

- Early signs and symptoms of pertussis are often non-specific, making it difficult to determine clinically who has pertussis in the earliest stages.
- Patients with signs and symptoms consistent with pertussis should be tested by PCR to confirm the diagnosis.
- Ideally, specimens should be collected during the first two to three weeks of cough.
- Collect a NP swab or NP aspirate for PCR testing using a pertussis test kit (colourless medium).  
**Do not use viral transport medium (pink).**
  - **To order test kits: [click here](#)**
  - **Specimen collection instructions: [click here](#)**

## Treat Pertussis

- Give antimicrobial therapy to patients with a highly suspected or confirmed pertussis.
- These macrolides are equally effective for treatment or prophylaxis of pertussis: azithromycin, clarithromycin, and erythromycin.
- Patients are considered to be non-infectious after completing the fifth day of appropriate antimicrobial treatment.

## Keep Vaccinations Up-to-Date

- Keeping up-to-date protects everyone.
- Tdap vaccine is recommended with every pregnancy between 27-32 weeks of gestation.
- One dose of Tdap is recommended for adults over 18 years of age.
- Ontario's provincially funded vaccine schedule supports vaccination with pertussis-containing vaccine throughout childhood.

## Report All Suspected & Confirmed Cases

- Call 1-800-922-0096 ext. 3500
- Fax a report to 519-631-1682. For a copy of the report form: [click here](#).

## Further Reading

- Refer to our [past comprehensive pertussis update](#) for further guidance around treatment or prophylaxis.

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