

**Date:** October 17, 2019  
**To:** South Zone Physicians  
**From:** Medical Officers of Health – South Zone  
**RE:** PERTUSSIS Outbreak Declared South Zone – West Geography  
Update #2

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Due to increasing incidence of newly confirmed Pertussis cases, an outbreak was declared on October 15, 2019. As of this morning, there have been 22 confirmed cases in the past 3 weeks. More disease is assumed to be circulating, due to the spectrum of disease severity and the under-reporting of illness.

Communities with confirmed cases to date:

- County of Lethbridge communities, Lethbridge, Raymond and Taber

Visitor restrictions have been implemented at Chinook Regional Hospital on the nursing units – Pediatrics, Labour and Delivery, Maternity/Child and NICU.

**Action for Physicians:**

- Obtain NP swab using the Regan-Lowe transport media and label with **EI#2019-436**
  - If your patient is symptomatic and has had contact with a confirmed case.
  - If your patient has repetitive coughing spells beyond 6 days of symptom onset.
  - Up to a maximum of 21 days after symptom onset to minimize false negatives.
- Note: There is no need to swab multiple cases within a single family unit, as they all likely have the same infection and would all be labelled as confirmed cases due to epidemiological linkage.
- Case management:
  - Antibiotics for confirmed cases (includes symptomatic household members);
  - All cases are required to stay home and not expose new people **for 5 days** after start of antibiotic therapy
  - If case refuses antibiotic treatment, the case should be excluded from public activities. The case should be excluded:
    - for 21 days from onset of paroxysmal cough, or
    - until the end of the cough, whichever comes first.
- Antibiotics for contacts with vulnerable household members. Public Health may identify vulnerable contacts (pregnant women and infants under one year of age), and request assistance from primary care physicians to prescribe antibiotic post exposure prophylaxis.

**Prevention:**

- Immunization as per Alberta immunization schedule for children and adults.
    - All adults 18 years of age and up are eligible to receive one dose of dTap.
    - One dose of pertussis containing vaccine for pregnant women in third trimester in every pregnancy
      - Clients can contact Health Link Alberta or their local Public Health office to determine if their immunizations are up-to-date.
    - We also stress the importance of vaccination for yourselves and your staff. Please make sure your staff is up-to-date on their pertussis vaccinations.
  - Take the opportunity to review dTap eligibility when tetanus immunization indicated
  - Early diagnosis and treatment to prevent spread to others
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**Reference:**

Alberta Notifiable Disease Guidelines at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/pertussis>