



SAN BENITO COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Press Release

Whooping Cough Death Reported of a California Infant

State and Local Public Health Officers Urge Pregnant Women to Get Immunized

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CONTACT:

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San Benito County—The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced yesterday, April 18th, that pertussis, better known as whooping cough, claimed the life of an Orange County infant. This is the first confirmed infant death from the disease since July 2018.

CDPH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that expectant mothers receive the whooping cough booster shot (also called Tdap, or tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis vaccine) at the earliest opportunity between 27 and 36 weeks of every pregnancy, even if previously immunized. Getting immunized during pregnancy boosts a mother's immunity and passes on protective antibodies directly to their babies before birth. This helps protect newborns until they are old enough to begin receiving their own whooping cough immunizations at 6 to 8 weeks of age.

Ralph Armstrong, DO, a Hollister-based OB-GYN, echoes the recommendations of CDPH and the CDC and urges pregnant women to receive a Tdap vaccine at 28 weeks. "When pregnant women receive a Tdap vaccine at 28 weeks, the antibodies pass through mother to baby, providing baby with protective antibodies. This helps protect baby until they are old enough to begin receiving their own whooping cough immunizations."

CDPH recommends the following actions to prevent the spread of Whooping Cough:

- Immunize babies against whooping cough as soon as possible. The first dose is recommended at two months of age, but can be given as early as six weeks of age.
- Immunize California 7th grade students with the whooping cough booster, Tdap.
- Obtain a whooping cough booster as an adult once in your life.

The symptoms of whooping cough vary by age. For children, whooping cough typically starts with a runny nose and cough for one to two weeks. The cough then worsens and often results in rapid coughing spells that end with a whooping sound. Young infants may not have typical whooping cough symptoms and may have no apparent cough. Parents may observe episodes in which breathing briefly stops and the infant's face turns red or purple. In adults, whooping cough may involve coughing that lasts for several weeks.

Most health plans cover Tdap vaccines, and many pharmacies offer it. Local clinics and pharmacies often offer Tdap vaccines to Medi-Cal members.

More [information about pertussis](http://www.cdph.ca.gov) is available on CDPH's website: www.cdph.ca.gov.

For more information about obtaining vaccinations and health insurance please call Public Health Services at (831) 637-5367.

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