
To:	General Practitioners, Hospital Specialists, Pharmacists, After-Hours Centres and Emergency Departments in the Wellington, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa districts
From:	Dr Annette Nesdale
Date:	16/05/2024
Title:	Pertussis (Whooping Cough) cases increasing in the Greater Wellington and Wairarapa

Please distribute the following information to relevant staff in your organisation.

All public health alerts are available at www.rph.org.nz (health professionals – public health alerts)

Pertussis (Whooping cough) awareness

Whooping cough

There has been 13 cases of Pertussis notified since the beginning of May in the Wellington/Wairarapa regions. This is a marked **increase** in cases as between January to April 2024, only four cases were notified.

Of the new cases reported this month:

- Age range 2 to 65 years.
- Ethnicity: Māori (2) European (10) Unknown ethnicity (1).

Pertussis can be particularly severe for young babies and they may require hospital care.

Vaccination

- Advise **pregnant people** of the local increase in Pertussis and recommend the free Boostrix vaccination from 16 weeks in every pregnancy.
- Pertussis vaccination should be encouraged for the **extended whānau of pregnant people, new babies** and infants, although depending on their age they may not be eligible for a funded vaccine.
- Encourage all **staff, including reception and administrative staff**, to be protected from pertussis as well as influenza and measles. Booster vaccinations are recommended 10-yearly for all lead maternity carers and healthcare workers who are in daily contact with infants
- **Prioritise on time immunisation** for all babies at 6w, 3m and 5m and boosters at 4y and 11y.

Testing, treatment and isolation

- Pertussis PCR is the recommended test. Testing after 4 weeks of cough is not useful.
 - Use UTM/VTM swab. Swab guide can be found [here](#)
- Probable and confirmed cases need to **isolate** at home for five days since starting antibiotic treatment or two days if treated with azithromycin.
- Treatment is not usually recommended if paroxysmal coughing is present for three or more weeks
- Antibiotic guidance is available on Health Pathways [here](#)

Management of symptomatic or high priority contacts

Recommended antibiotics and dosages are the same as for case treatment. Guidance is available on HealthPathways

Notify suspected cases of pertussis using the form [here](#) or phone the notifications line on (04) 570 9267.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Additional information is available by visiting our website [here](#)
- Factsheets on whooping cough are available [here](#)
- The Ministry of Health www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/whooping-cough IMAC: www.immune.org.nz/diseases/pertussis
- KidsHealth: www.kidshealth.org.nz/whooping-cough