



California Department of Health Services

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State of California—Health and Human Services Agency Department of Health Services



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER Governor

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TO: Private Sector Vaccines for Children (VFC) Providers

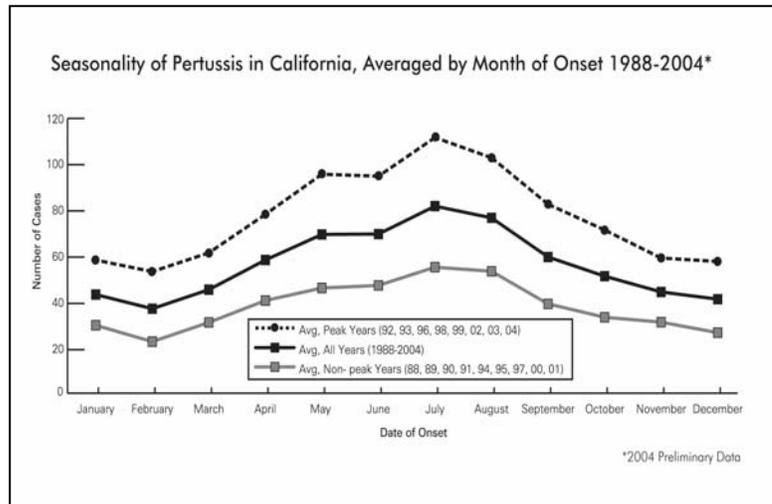
FROM: Howard Backer, M.D., M.P.H., Chief Immunization Branch

SUBJECT: PERTUSSIS AWARENESS

In California and the rest of the U.S., the number of reported pertussis cases is unusually high this year. Pertussis occurs year-round, but summertime is the peak season (see graph below).

Pertussis in Infants

Pertussis is most severe in infants who are too young to be vaccinated. One-quarter of the reported pertussis cases in California this year have been ≤ 3 months of age. Many of these infants were hospitalized, including two with fatal disease. Immunization Branch statewide surveillance data suggest that even one dose of DTaP may offer infants some protection against pertussis, although full protection requires additional doses. The first dose of DtaP may be given to infants as young as six weeks old. Promptly report suspected and confirmed pertussis cases to your local health department to help limit transmission.



Presentation varies by age

The clinical manifestations of pertussis vary with age and immunity. Classic pertussis is a cough lasting ≥ 2 weeks with paroxysmal coughing with post-tussive whoop or vomiting; this presentation is more common in non-immune children between 1 and 10 years of age. Infants aged less than 6 months may have apnea without paroxysms or whoop. Adolescents and adults who have been previously immunized or infected may have only prolonged cough. Recognition and diagnosis are important, since close contacts and high risk contacts may benefit from prophylactic or early symptom treatment.

New Flyer Available Now

Enclosed with this letter is a new bilingual flyer to heighten awareness, "What Should Parents Know about Whooping Cough" (IMM-817 ES). The flyer is suitable for providing to parents or

posting in exam and waiting rooms. Additional copies are available from your local health department or <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/izgroup/pdf/IMM817ES.pdf>.

Also enclosed are respiratory hygiene "**Health Alert**" cling-on flyers (IMM-783K) that you can post in your waiting room. You also may want your reception desk staff ready to provide masks to coughing patients in your waiting room to prevent spread of pertussis, influenza, and other cough illnesses.

New Tdap Vaccines Approved for Adolescents

Because immunity from immunization or infection is not lifelong, adolescents and adults are vulnerable to pertussis yet are not eligible for childhood DtaP vaccines. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently licensed new tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccines to help protect adolescents and adults against pertussis: BOOSTRIX®, manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals, is licensed for adolescents 10 through 18 years old, while ADACEL™, manufactured by sanofi pasteur, is licensed for persons 11 through 64 years old. We expect these vaccines to become available to California VFC providers in September or October. Please consider this as you place vaccine orders; this new vaccine is expected to replace Td booster doses in adolescent populations.

In June 2005, the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) revised the VFC Resolutions concerning vaccines to prevent Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis, http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vfc/acip_resolutions/605dtap.pdf, to recommend that a Tdap booster shot be given to adolescents:

- 11 and 12 years old instead of tetanus-diphtheria (Td) vaccine
- 13 through 18 years old if they have never received a booster dose of Td.

Booster shots for adolescents and adults will help to limit the spread of pertussis to these groups and to young infants who remain at risk of severe or fatal disease.

For additional information, please contact your local VFC Representative or the VFC customer service line at (877) 243-8832.

Enclosures

cc: DHS Immunization Branch Field Representatives
Local Health Officers
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Local Communicable Disease Control Coordinators
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