

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Back-to-School Immunizations are Essential

Plan ahead to ensure students are ready

[Kannapolis, N.C.] – The Cabarrus Health Alliance urges parents to plan ahead to see that their children are properly immunized before the beginning of the new school year. Dr. William F. Pilkington, CEO, Public Health Director, states “We want parents to know that by law, their children must be up-to-date on their required immunizations prior to school entry. Vaccines are a safe and effective way to help individuals protect themselves and their families from disease.”

Dr. Pilkington announced that the Cabarrus Health Alliance has a limited amount of state supplied vaccine for students in grades K-8 which is available at no charge. Immunizations are offered at the Kannapolis location, Mondays and Thursdays, 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. and on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. To schedule an appointment call **704-920-1205**. Parents are asked to bring the child’s immunization records, Medicaid card or insurance card.

Dr. Pilkington stated, “The Cabarrus Health Alliance investigated five lab-confirmed cases of Pertussis in Cabarrus County over the last six weeks. The cases have involved children ranging in age from six weeks to 14 years of age with no connection. Close contacts to the cases were also investigated.” Dr. Pilkington reiterated, “This is why immunizations are so important. It’s the best way to protect against disease.”

For more information on school immunizations requirements in North Carolina, visit <http://www.immunizenc.com/SchoolReqs.htm#requirements> or www.cabarrushealth.org



Pertussis

(also known as *WHOOPING COUGH*)

What is pertussis?

Pertussis is a highly contagious disease. It is spread when germs pass from an infected person to the nose and throat of others by airborne droplets. It takes 7-10 days from the time a person is exposed until symptoms may appear.

What are the SYMPTOMS of pertussis?

The symptoms include cough and runny nose, followed by **severe coughing** which may interfere with eating, drinking and breathing. A *crowing* sound or high-pitched *whoop* is characteristic.

Coughing may last five minutes and may trigger the vomiting.

Is pertussis a serious disease?

Complications **may** include pneumonia or inflammation of the brain.

What is the TREATMENT for pertussis?

Persons with symptoms or who have been in contact with pertussis should contact their physician. Pertussis is treated with antibiotics.

Is pertussis preventable?

Pertussis is preventable through the **diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus immunization** (also known as **DTP or DTaP**) given at the ages of 2 months, 4 months, 6 months and 12 months, as well as between 4 and 6 years of age. The **best** prevention is the immunization of children **ON TIME**.

Pertussis vaccine is **now** available in a combination vaccine for those who need a tetanus-diphtheria booster, over 10 years of age. This vaccine is available at the Cabarrus Health Alliance.

Are there risks associated with the diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus vaccine?

The risk from pertussis is much greater than the risk from the vaccine.

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