



Saguaro High School
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****PERTUSSIS (WHOOPING COUGH) ****

9 January, 2015

Dear Saguaro Parent/Guardian:

Your child may have been exposed to pertussis (also known as “whooping cough”). Pertussis is a highly contagious disease caused by a bacteria which is spread through the air by coughing or contact with infected secretions from the mouth, nose or throat. Adults, adolescents and even fully immunized children can get pertussis and pass it on to babies and very young children who are more likely to develop serious illness and complications.

Saguaro High School administration and nurse urge parents to contact their family’s health care provider if any of the following signs/symptoms are observed in their student or other family member.

- Coughing illness lasting longer than one to two weeks (without another known cause).
- Coughing illness which becomes worse over 1-2 weeks with long series of violent coughing lasting several minutes, person appears and feels well between “fits” of coughing.
- Spasms of cough (sudden spells or “fits” of coughing where one cough follows the next without a break for a breath, a whooping sound may be heard in children).
- Throwing up/vomiting after a “fit” of coughing.
- Trouble catching their breath or turning blue after a “fit” of coughing.
- Coughing is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help.

If you observe any of the above symptoms, please keep your student home and contact his/her health care provider. If these symptoms appear while your student is in school, you will be called to pick him/her up. Your student will not be allowed to return to school until he/she is checked by their health care provider. Please show this letter to the health care provider when your student is seen. If whooping cough is diagnosed and your student is placed on treatment, he/she can return to school after five full days of appropriate antibiotic therapy. Your student can return to school immediately if the doctor verifies they do not have pertussis.

We also recommend that families with infants/children review their child’s immunization record with his/her health care provider to assure they are up-to-date on all their DTaP and Tdap vaccine doses. All children should have three doses of DTaP vaccine by six months of age with a booster dose given at 12-15 months of age and again at 4 years of age. Adolescents should have one dose of Tdap at 10-11 years old. Adults can also receive Tdap to protect against pertussis. Families with infants should avoid contact with people who have coughing illnesses and adults with cough should not be close to infants.

Please contact the Maricopa County Office of Community Health Nursing at (602) 506-6767 (ask for a surveillance nurse) if you or your student’s health care provider have any questions.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Nancy Tillinghast RN, BSN
480.484.7111

