

May 27, 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This letter contains information to help you and your family stay up to date on pertussis disease (also known as whooping cough). The Public Health Agency of Canada and Public Health New Brunswick are monitoring the recent increase in pertussis infections happening in Canada and internationally.

Pertussis is very contagious. It can spread from an infected person to others by air through coughing and sneezing.

The best protection against pertussis is vaccination. In New Brunswick, pertussis-containing vaccines are free and offered to:

- Infants and young children at two, four and six months of age, and a booster dose at 18 months of age.
- Children 4 years of age as a booster dose before starting school.
- Adolescents in grade 7 as part of the school immunization campaign.
- Adults who have not previously received pertussis-containing vaccines in adulthood; particularly those who anticipate having regular contact with an infant.
- Pregnant individuals in the third trimester of every pregnancy, regardless of immunization history.

Given the situation we advise you to do the following:

1. Please check your vaccine status and/or the vaccine status of your children with your health care provider, [MyHealthNB](#) account, or [local public health office](#).
2. Please watch for typical symptoms of pertussis: it starts like a cold with sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever and mild cough. The cough gets progressively worse, and could lead to serious coughing spells that often (but not always) end with a “whoop.” The coughing may be so severe that it makes the person gag or vomit. Infants and children may find it difficult to eat, drink, or breathe.

Pertussis can affect individuals at any age; however, severity is greatest among infants who are not yet protected by a complete vaccine series. Young children are also at highest risk of complications, such as pneumonia or seizures.

3. Individuals who have symptoms of pertussis are encouraged to continue to practice general healthy behaviours, such as washing their hands often, covering their coughs and sneezes, limiting contact with those at risk of more severe illness, and staying home if sick.
  - Call your health care provider, 811, or eVisitNB and follow their instructions for testing or care if you or your child(ren) develop symptoms of pertussis.
  - Individuals who have tested positive for pertussis should be excluded from work, school or childcare as directed by public health.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to keep New Brunswick healthy. Further information is available at:

[https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/cdc/content/whooping\\_cough.html](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/cdc/content/whooping_cough.html).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "AR" followed by a flourish.

Dr. Arifur Rahman,  
Acting Deputy Chief Medical Officer of Health