

Williams County Health Department

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Williams County Health Department Responding to Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Outbreak

Williams County, OH – The Williams County Health Department (WCHD) is currently investigating and responding to an outbreak of Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, within a local Amish community. At this time, **six confirmed cases have been identified among infants, children, and adolescents**, and public health officials are continuing to monitor for additional cases as the investigation progresses. At this stage of the investigation, contact tracing efforts are ongoing and there is no indication of widespread transmission to the general public.

Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory illness that spreads through coughing and sneezing. Symptoms often begin mildly and worsen over one-two weeks. **Symptoms of pertussis may include:**

- Runny or stuffy nose
- Mild fever
- Persistent cough that worsens over time
- Severe coughing fits, often followed by a “whooping” sound when breathing in
- Vomiting after coughing
- Difficulty breathing or catching breath after coughing

The disease can be especially dangerous for infants and young children, as well as individuals with weakened immune systems or who are immunocompromised.

Public health officials are actively working with community leaders, healthcare providers, and families to limit the spread of illness.

“Protecting the health of our community is our top priority,” said WCHD’s Nursing Director Nathan Hoffer. “We are working closely with affected families and community partners to ensure individuals have the information and resources they need to reduce the spread of illness.”

WCHD also extends its appreciation to local healthcare providers, including the Bryan Community Health Center, for their continued partnership and efforts in identifying, treating, and helping to prevent the spread of illness in the community.

The Williams County Health Department encourages all residents to take the following precautions:

- Check if your or your family members’ DTaP (for infants and children) or Tdap (booster for adults) vaccines are up to date
- Stay home if you are experiencing symptoms of illness
- Avoid close contact with others, especially infants and vulnerable individuals, if you are feeling sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water
- Contact your healthcare provider if you develop a persistent or severe cough

Vaccination remains the most effective way to prevent pertussis. The DTaP and Tdap vaccines are recommended for children, adolescents, and adults, including pregnant women to help protect newborns. Individuals who are not up to date on their vaccinations or are unsure of their status are encouraged to speak with their healthcare provider or call the Williams County Health Department at (419) 485-3141.

The Williams County Health Department will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.

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For more information go to www.williamscountyhealth.org or call 419-485-3141.