

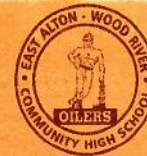
East Alton - Wood River Community High School

777 N. WOOD RIVER AVENUE - WOOD RIVER, ILLINOIS 62095-1227

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March 21, 2016

Dear EAWR Parent:

As a matter of information and precaution, I would like to inform you that a student attending East Alton-Wood River High School was diagnosed with pertussis (whooping cough). However, this student's physician has deemed that he/she is no longer contagious (as of March 13th). As a matter of fact, that student is back in school with the consent of his/her physician.

We were first notified of this case on Thursday, March 17, 2016 by the Madison County Health Department, the last day that students were in class last week. At that time, the student was back in school and, after the regimen of antibiotics, was declared non-contagious.

The family was not aware that their son/daughter even had pertussis (They presumed it was a bad cold) since the test results and diagnosis were not even known to the family until last week, after the antibiotics treatment had been fully given, and after the contagious period was over. We must inform you that the student did attend school, however, while having been contagious, unbeknownst to his/her parents or the school nurse, until notified last Thursday of the test results.

Even though we believe that this was the only incident of pertussis at EAWR and that the student is safe to return to school, we do feel it's important for you to be aware and on guard with your own son/daughter. After all, pertussis is a highly infectious (but usually mild) illness that is easily transmitted through coughing and sneezing and may last for several months. Since the summer of 2011, over 2,000 Illinois residents have been reported with pertussis (whooping cough); over 50% were between the ages of 5 and 17 years old.

Symptoms of pertussis may appear 5 to 10 days following exposure but can take up to 21 days. The initial symptoms of pertussis are similar to those of common cold: runny nose, low-grade fever and a mild occasional cough, which can become severe and spasmodic - with a distinctive "whooping" sound (sometimes described as "barking") - and can progress to vomiting between bouts of coughing. Students with a persistent cough or cold symptoms should consult their health care providers.

Patients with pertussis must be isolated from day care, school, work, and public gatherings until at least 5 days after the start of appropriate antibiotic therapy to limit further

transmission.

Although most people recover completely from pertussis, complications from the disease can be severe in high-risk groups, especially infants under one year, and children who have not been fully immunized against the disease.

The Madison County Health Department recommends that all close contacts to a person with Pertussis receive the recommended antibiotic treatment even if they have been vaccinated recently against pertussis. Close contacts include household members and persons who have had direct contact with respiratory, oral, and/or nasal secretions from a person with pertussis or have been within 3 feet of that person for at least 10 minutes.

This letter serves as notification that your son/daughter may have been exposed to pertussis. Please remain alert for symptoms of pertussis and contact your health care provider if your child has or develops a coughing illness. In addition, *frequent hand washing and respiratory hygiene (e.g. covering your cough, coughing into tissues, disposing of tissues promptly) are important practices that help to limit the spread of infection.*

If you or your physician have any further questions, please contact the Madison County Health Department at 618-692-8954 x2.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Pearson,
Superintendent