



**Media Advisory**  
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## **Milwaukee Health Department Continues Response to Pertussis Cases in Community**

### ***Update on MHD Response Activities In City of Milwaukee***

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) has mobilized staff in response to an increase of pertussis (whooping cough) cases being reported in the City of Milwaukee and surrounding municipalities over the past week.

**To date, 46 confirmed cases of pertussis have been reported in Milwaukee County through the County-wide Communicable Disease Surveillance Network (SURVNET) with 26 of the cases in the City of Milwaukee.** In addition, there are 33 additional cases being investigated in Milwaukee County that are currently classified as either probable or suspect. The increase in probable and suspect cases are the result of intensive follow-up by the MHD on close contacts of previous cases reported through SURVNET. To date, **over 3500 letters** to close contacts of confirmed cases have been sent by the MHD recommending symptom monitoring, isolation and/or antibiotic.

The MHD is also in the process of developing messaging for high risk institutional settings such as Milwaukee Public Schools and private child care facilities to alert individuals of pertussis cases in the community as well as reporting and preventive measures being enacted to limit the spread of disease. Private healthcare providers have already received information from the MHD on reporting, diagnosis, testing and treatment of pertussis.

Pertussis is a bacterial infection of the respiratory tract that is transmitted through airborne droplets by face-to-face or close contact with an infected individual. In infants and children, the disease begins much like a common cold and progresses to prolonged and acute coughing, often followed by vomiting and exhaustion. Following the cough, individuals may make a loud whooping sound as they struggle to inhale air. In adults, the symptoms are much milder and varied, but persistent (more than one week duration) cough is still common. Antibiotic treatment can prevent or limit the severity of illness and the period of contagiousness to others.

A hotline (286-3616) has been established by the MHD and will be operational 8:30-4:00 p.m. over the Memorial Day weekend (5/29-5/31). Additional information can be accessed on the MHD website [www.milwaukee.gov/health](http://www.milwaukee.gov/health) MHD staff will be working throughout the weekend to continue follow-up on case contacts to ensure that symptomatic individuals are reported and receive appropriate treatment.

We strongly recommend that all individuals initiate preventive measures including good respiratory hygiene (covering nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing) and good hand washing. Parents should make certain that all children ages 6 years and under are completely up to date on their pertussis shots.