

HALTON REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
TEL: 905-825-6000 FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians

Medical Chiefs of Staff: Joseph Brant Hospital, Halton Healthcare (Oakville, Milton and Georgetown Hospitals)  
Chairs of: Family Practice, Paediatrics, Internal Medicine, Emergency, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Surgery  
Chief of Laboratory Services and Infection Control Practitioners  
Milton Housewives

POST IN: Emergency Department and Physicians Lounge

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: June 20, 2019

**RE: Pertussis Outbreak in Georgetown Declared Over**

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On April 15, 2019 you received a communication informing you of a pertussis outbreak at Centennial Middle School in Georgetown. Since there have been no cases for 6 weeks the outbreak has been declared over effective June 17, 2019. Please do not use the outbreak number (provided in a prior communication) for any further testing. There were 11 confirmed cases and 1 probable case of pertussis associated with this outbreak. Managing this outbreak involved many public health nurses and staff conducting an extensive investigation, case and contact management, and collaboration with the school, the parent community and health care providers. Thank you for your attention and efforts to protect the health and safety of Halton residents.

Please be aware that pertussis continues to circulate in Ontario and across Canada.

**Vaccinate Your Patients When Eligible**

Please ensure that your patients are up to date with their pertussis immunization. This is particularly important for 14 year-old patients whose immunity may be waning following their primary series. Recent evidence has demonstrated that pertussis immunity does wane over time, from around 80% effective at 1 year to 40% at 8 years post-vaccination. This makes middle school children particularly vulnerable to pertussis – with 10 out of the 12 cases (83%) being aged 11-14 years old in this recent outbreak. Adults are also eligible for a single booster dose.

**Consider Pertussis**

Consider pertussis as part of the differential diagnosis for patients with a prolonged cough or 'whoop'. If pertussis is suspected, please test using a [bordetella nasopharyngeal swab](#) prior to beginning treatment and report to the Health Department at 311. Testing kits must be ordered from Public Health Ontario Laboratory. Please enter '*Bordetella pertussis* PCR' under test description. The **PCR transport medium is colourless**. Please do not use the multi-organism transport medium, which is pink.

**Protecting Contacts and the Community**

Post exposure chemoprophylaxis is recommended for only household contacts and close contacts (shared confined space for more than 1 hour) who are infants (less than 1 year) or pregnant women in their third trimester. The most appropriate antibiotic is a macrolide (azithromycin or clarithromycin).

The Halton Region Health Department is always available by calling 311 to assist with testing recommendations, and case and contact follow up.

Please report all suspected or confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (formerly Reportable Diseases) to the Halton Region Health Department as soon as possible. Diseases marked \* should be reported immediately by telephone (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or fax (Mon-Fri, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm only). Other diseases can be reported the next working day. Call 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866. For general information, please visit [halton.ca](http://halton.ca).

**If any link provided in this memo does not work, please cut and paste it into your web browser.**