

MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICERS **ALERT** FOR PHYSICIANS

July 28, 2017

Increased Pertussis Activity in South Okanagan

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- Pertussis Activity

Pertussis activity continues to occur across the health authority, particularly in the South Okanagan. From January 1 to July 25, 2017 a total of 50 laboratory-confirmed or epidemiologically-linked cases were reported across the South Okanagan region compared to less than 5 cases in 2016 for the same time period.

Pertussis rates are highest in Princeton area. However, an increase in activity has also been observed in Penticton and Summerland areas. Cases have been reported across all age groups, including three infants less than one year of age.

Early diagnosis and treatment are critical for communicable disease control and to improve outcomes. Please consider the following recommendations:

1. Include pertussis in the differential diagnosis of any patient with a prolonged or paroxysmal cough, especially infants.
2. Test patients with suspected pertussis using a nasopharyngeal swab for pertussis culture and PCR
3. Report suspect, probable and confirmed cases to the CD Unit @ 1 – 866 – 778 – 7736.
4. Offer chemoprophylaxis to high-risk contacts.
5. Encourage your patients to update their immunizations: especially infants due for the first dose (two months)

Please refer to the MHO Alert for Physicians from August 6, 2015. Accessible from: <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/AboutUs/Leadership/MHO/MHO%20Updates/MHO%20Alert%20-%20August%206,%202015.pdf> for detailed guidance on testing, treatment, and chemoprophylaxis.

At present, there is no change to the provincial pertussis immunization guidelines regarding recommendations and eligibility. **Full details are available in the BC Centre for Disease Control Communicable Disease Control Manual, Chapter 2 – Immunization Program at <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/communicable-disease-control-manual/immunization>**

Interior Health will continue to monitor the situation and assess if expanded control measures may be needed.

To view previous MHO UPDATES, go to:
www.interiorhealth.ca/AboutUs/Leadership/Pages/MHOUpdates.aspx

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