

8 January 2019

Second spike in pertussis outbreak - call for vigilance

- Pertussis notifications for infants and in those aged five to nine years increased through the last two months of 2018.
- It is expected that the number of notifications will continue during the school holidays, given the level of community spread.
- The increase is across the Auckland region, with a pre-dominance in the WDHB area.
- Over 29 schools and 15 early childhood centres have had to exclude children with the illness and manage close contacts over the last two months.

Promote pertussis immunisation for all pregnant women and families with babies.

Pertussis is highly infectious and a potentially serious illness especially in the young. Around 70% of infants under one year of age with pertussis require hospitalisation.

- For this outbreak, the maternal vaccination rate for cases under 20 weeks is 22%
- Around 45% of all cases under one year of age have been from the most deprived quintile
- 24% of all cases were known to be up to date with immunisations.

For pertussis, an endemic disease, ARPHS manages institutional outbreaks, provides advice and support, and monitors disease trends.

ARPHS appreciates the support of primary care in following up household contacts. Key steps are described in the TASK pneumonic below and there is a complete management pathway on the [ARPHS website](#).

Remember the household contact management TASK:

T- treat high priority household contacts (under one year of age / pregnant women / immunocompromised)

A-assess symptomatic household contacts

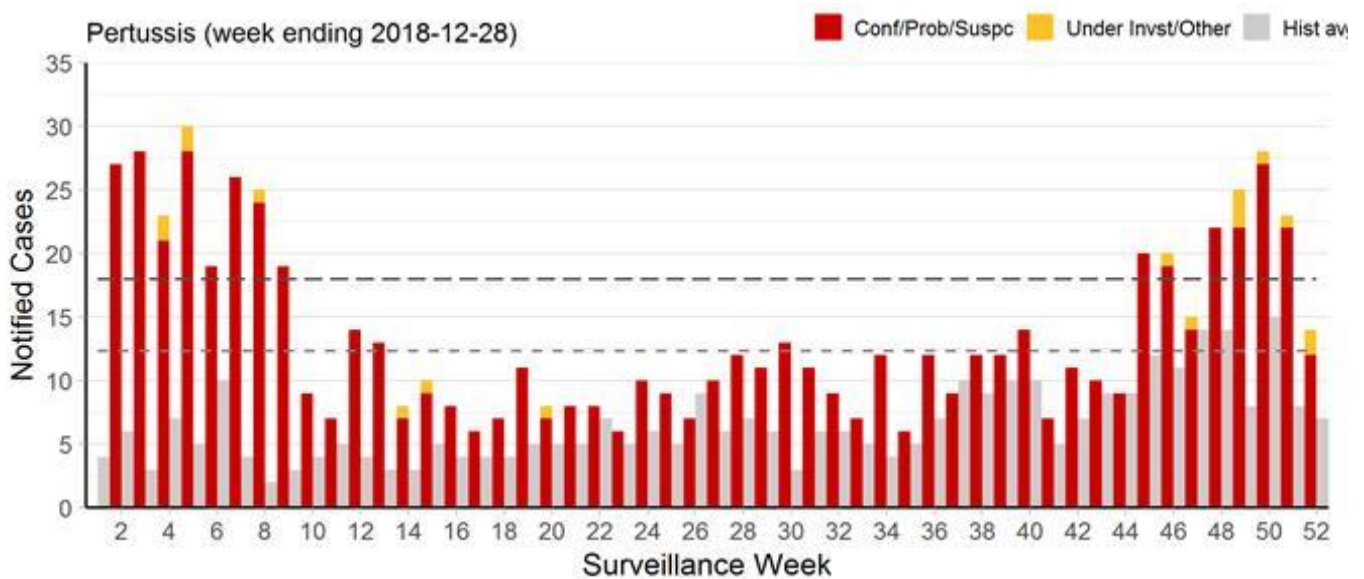
S-suggest and promote immunisation

K-keep in touch with public health to notify new cases and to refer schools/ ECECs identified for further management.

Please consider the whole family when providing care or promoting immunisation, even though some family members may not be enrolled with your practice. This is a highly infectious disease and there is currently extensive community spread.

Be vigilant regarding the following:

1. **Consider pertussis** in patients with paroxysmal cough and especially children attending local primary schools or early childhood centres.
2. **Exclude** cases from school, work, other institution, and social interaction for
 - 2 days (48 hours) since treatment started if Azithromycin used as an antibiotic; or
 - 5 days since treatment started if Erythromycin used; or
 - 3 weeks from the start of cough if no antibiotic treatment is given to prevent spread.
3. **Notify** ARPHS (09) 6234600 **on suspicion**
4. **Recommend** pertussis immunisation to parents and pregnant women. Immunisation offers the best protection from pertussis.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information, please refer to ARPHS website: <http://www.arphs.health.nz/public-health-topics/disease-and-illness/whooping-cough-pertussis/> or call us on (09) 6234600

For more immunisation advice call the Immunisation Advisory Centre free on 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863) or visit its website <http://www.immune.org.nz>