

# Pertussis Alert Now Update Message

February 7, 2012

“Good evening parents. This call is to inform you that the Wattsburg Area School District is still under instruction from the Erie County Department of Health to send all students home who present with a cough illness. This is due to an outbreak of pertussis, or “whooping cough”, in our school district, as well as in other areas of the county and city of Erie. Some of the students in our schools may have been exposed to pertussis. All students with a cough must be seen by a physician for diagnosis and treatment before they can return to school.

If your child is coughing, please keep your child home until your child is no longer coughing or until cleared to return to school by your family doctor. Please inform your doctor that your child may have been exposed to pertussis at school. Documentation from your physician is required before your child can return to school. If you have any questions, please contact the Erie County Department of Health @ 451-6700. Thank you and have a good evening”.

Nancy Sadaly  
Superintendent  
Wattsburg Area School District  
[Nancy.Sadaly@wattsburg.org](mailto:Nancy.Sadaly@wattsburg.org)  
Phone: 814-824-3400- X4515

# Pertussis Alert Now Message

The Wattsburg Area School District is considered by the Pennsylvania Department of Health as having an outbreak of pertussis, otherwise known as Whooping cough. There is a lot of respiratory illness in the community, and some people have been diagnosed with pertussis. Some of the children in our schools may have been exposed to pertussis at school. A letter with this information was sent home with your child on December 22, 2011.

All 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders were given another letter today, so if you have a child in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade, please check your child's book bag today.

If your child has a cough illness, regardless of grade, please do not send your child to school until seen by your physician. The health department has instructed our school nurses to refer students with cough illness for diagnosis and treatment. If your child is in school with a cough and or symptoms of respiratory illness, he or she will be sent home by the school nurse and referred for a medical evaluation. Inform your physician that your child may have been exposed to pertussis at school.

If you have any questions, please contact the Erie County Department of Health at 451- 6700, or your child's school nurse.

# Wattsburg Area School District

10782 Wattsburg Road, Eric, PA 16509 • Phone: 814-824-3400 • Fax: 814-824-5200 • [www.wattsburg.org](http://www.wattsburg.org)

Mrs. Nancy Sadaly  
Superintendent

Mr. Thomas Rinke  
Assistant Superintendent

Mr. Stephen Maksimuk  
Business Administrator

December 22, 2011

**RE: HEALTH ALERT-COUGH ILLNESS, PERTUSSIS aka Whooping Cough**

Dear Parent/Employee:

The Erie County Department of Health has notified the Wattsburg School District (Seneca, Wattsburg Middle and Elementary, and St. Boniface School) that children and school staff may have been exposed to a confirmed case of Pertussis, also known as whooping cough. We have just become aware that there have been several confirmed cases of Pertussis in the school district. They have all been under medical care.

Since the school will be closed for the holidays, we are sending this notice to all students and school staff (including bus drivers) in the school district. It is recommended that if a person in your family becomes ill with a cough illness that medical care is sought to obtain appropriate medical management and the medical provider is made aware of possible exposure to Pertussis. Keep in mind, your child may not have had any contact with the student who had Pertussis. However, health and safety is of our highest priority, so we are sending this information on Pertussis to all families in the event that someone would get symptoms. Please read the following information provided by the Erie County Department of Health.

People with pertussis usually spread the disease by coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others, who then breathe in the pertussis bacteria. The disease starts like the common cold, with runny nose or congestion, sneezing, and maybe mild cough or fever. Pertussis can become a series of violent and rapid coughing fits sometimes followed by vomiting that continues for weeks. The incubation period, or the time from initial contact with an infected person and the first appearance of Pertussis symptoms is commonly 6-20 days.

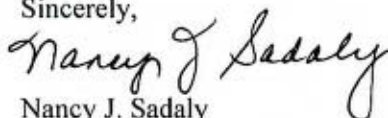
Even if your child was immunized with Pertussis vaccine given as DTaP before school entry, or recently boosted with a Tdap vaccine (recommended at age 11-12 years) he/she may still get the disease. Please check the immunization (shot) record of the children and adults in your family and make sure they are up to date with their Pertussis vaccine. DTaP vaccine is recommended at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 12-18 months and 4-6 years of age. Tdap is recommended at ages 11-18 years, however can be given to persons starting at age 7 years or older, including adults if they have not received Tdap vaccine in the past. One dose of Tdap vaccine (pertussis containing vaccine) is recommended for all adults. In certain cases, a dose of Tdap may be recommended for ages 7 and older.

If a person has been coughing for 2 weeks or longer, or develops a severe or unusual cough illness and has not been seen by a medical provider, please have them evaluated by a medical provider. A nasopharyngeal culture for pertussis should be done by the doctor if he or she feels the person may have pertussis. This culture should be done before the person starts on an antibiotic. Please take this letter with you to show the medical provider.

Please notify the Intake Nurse at the Erie County Department of Health at 451-6700 if a person develops a cough illness as described above. This allows the Health Department to start prompt disease control measures. If you have any questions, please also call the Health Department and ask for the Intake Nurse.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Nancy J. Sadaly  
Superintendent

# Wattsburg Area School District

10782 Wattsburg Road, Erie, PA 16509 • Phone: 814-824-3400 • Fax: 814-824-5200 • [www.wattsburg.org](http://www.wattsburg.org)

---

Mrs. Nancy Sadaly  
Superintendent

Mr. Thomas Rinke  
Assistant Superintendent

Mr. Stephen Maksimuk  
Business Administrator

January 11, 2012

**RE: HEALTH ALERT-COUGH ILLNESS, PERTUSSIS aka Whooping Cough**

Dear Parent/Employee:

**The Erie County Department of Health has notified the Wattsburg School District that children enrolled in the SECOND Grade class have been exposed to a confirmed case of Pertussis, also known as whooping cough. There have been several confirmed cases of Pertussis in Erie County.**

**It is recommended that if your child develops a cough illness, then you should seek medical care. The medical provider should be made aware of possible exposure to Pertussis. Health and safety is of our highest priority. Please read the following information provided by the Erie County Department of Health.**

People with pertussis usually spread the disease by coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others, who then breathe in the pertussis bacteria. The disease starts like the common cold, with runny nose or congestion, sneezing, and maybe mild cough or fever. Pertussis can become a series of violent and rapid coughing fits, sometimes followed by vomiting, that continues for weeks. The incubation period, or the time from initial contact with an infected person and the first appearance of Pertussis symptoms is commonly 7-21 days.

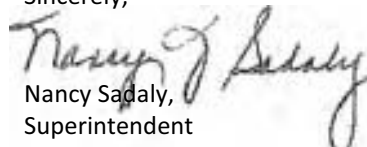
Even if your child was immunized with Pertussis vaccine given as DTaP before school entry, or recently boosted with a Tdap vaccine (recommended at age 11-12 years) he/she may still get the disease. Please check the immunization (shot) record of your child and make sure they are up to date with their Pertussis vaccine. DTaP vaccine is recommended at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 12-18 months and 4-6 years of age. Tdap is recommended at ages 11-18 years, however can be given to persons starting at age 7 years or older, including adults if they have not received Tdap vaccine in the past. One dose of Tdap vaccine (pertussis containing vaccine) is recommended for all adults. In certain cases, a dose of Tdap may be recommended for ages 7 and older.

If a person has been coughing for 2 weeks or longer, or develops a severe or unusual cough illness and has not been seen by a medical provider, please have them evaluated by a medical provider. A nasopharyngeal culture for pertussis should be done by the doctor if he or she feels the person may have pertussis. This culture should be done before the person starts on an antibiotic. Please take this letter with you to show the medical provider.

Please notify the Intake Nurse at the Erie County Department of Health at 451-6700 if a person develops a cough illness as described above. This allows the Health Department to start prompt disease control measures. If you have any questions, please also call the Health Department and ask for the Intake Nurse.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

  
Nancy Sadaly,  
Superintendent

# Wattsburg Area School District

10782 Wattsburg Road, Erie, PA 16509 • Phone: 814-824-3400 • Fax: 814-824-5200 • [www.wattsburg.org](http://www.wattsburg.org)

Mrs. Nancy Sadaly  
Superintendent

Mr. Thomas Rinke  
Assistant Superintendent

Mr. Stephen Maksimuk  
Business Administrator

January 11, 2012

**RE: HEALTH ALERT requiring follow-up Whooping Cough exposure**

Dear Parent/Employee:

**The Erie County Department of Health has notified the school that children enrolled in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Wattsburg Elementary School have been exposed to a case of Pertussis, also known as whooping cough.**

The exposure to this contagious illness occurred on school days from January 4<sup>th</sup> to January 6<sup>th</sup> 2012. The case of Pertussis has been under medical care.

Pertussis is easily spread and begins with mild upper respiratory tract symptoms with cough and progresses to severe spasms of cough, sometimes followed by vomiting. The incubation period, or the time from exposure to the time that the disease would occur is usually 7 days to 21 days following exposure.

**Your child is considered to be a close contact to this case.** Close contacts are people who have been in face-to-face exposure within 3 feet of a symptomatic person or who have shared the same confined space in close proximity with a symptomatic person for  $\geq 1$  hour. The children in the school are considered close contacts to the child with the Pertussis; **therefore your child needs to be on post-exposure preventive treatment with an appropriate antibiotic.**

**Please call your child's physician and inform or show him/her this letter. Your physician should order one of the following antibiotics for your child: Erythromycin, Azithromycin, Clarithromycin or Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole. These are the antibiotics recommended for treatment and post-exposure treatment of Pertussis.** Depending on the antibiotic ordered, it may be ordered for 5 days or up to 14 days, it depends on the specific one ordered for your child.

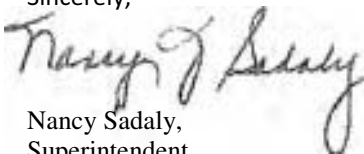
Even if your child was immunized with Pertussis vaccine given as DPT or DTaP, before school entry, or recently boosted with a **Tdap** vaccine, he/she may still contract the disease. If you have other children please check their immunization record and make sure they are up to date with their Pertussis vaccine which is recommended at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 12-18 months, 4-6 years, and 11-12 years of age.

If your child has been coughing for 2 weeks or longer, or develops a cough illness and has not been seen by a physician, please have your child evaluated by a physician. A nasopharyngeal culture for Pertussis would be recommended if the physician feels the child may have Pertussis. This culture should be done before the child starts the antibiotic. ***Please take this letter with you to show the child's physician.***

Please notify the Intake Nurse at the Erie County Department of Health at 451-6700 if your child has a cough illness or develops a cough illness as stated above. This allows the Health Department to initiate prompt disease control measures. If you have any questions, please also call the Health Department and ask for the Intake Nurse.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Nancy Sadaly,  
Superintendent

*The Wattsburg Area School District challenges all students with rigorous, individualized instruction provided by a caring staff  
An Equal Rights and Opportunity School District*