

February 22, 2013

To: Physicians in New Brunswick

Subject: Pertussis outbreak update

Dear colleagues:

This is to update you on the pertussis outbreak in New Brunswick. As of February 1st 2013 the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health has determined that the pertussis outbreak has ended. No new cases of pertussis have been reported to Public Health since late December 2012, and disease activity has returned to historical levels. In total 1421 confirmed cases of pertussis were reported to Public Health in the course of the outbreak.

Clinicians are, however, requested to maintain a high index of suspicion for pertussis diagnosis in any patient presenting with compatible symptoms. Pertussis is a reportable disease under the Public Health Act in New Brunswick. Please report all suspected cases of pertussis to the Regional Medical Officers of Health verbally within 24 hours and in writing within 7 days.

Immunization is the best available protection against the disease. Please check the vaccination status of all presenting patients to ensure that children and adults are up-to-date with their immunization according to the New Brunswick Routine Immunization Schedule (<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/en/CDC/Immunization/RoutineImmunizationSchedule.pdf>).

Please counsel pregnant women you see in your practice about protection against pertussis. In a non-outbreak situation, please follow the current recommendation of the National Advisory Committee for Immunization's (NACI) of administering Tdap immediately postpartum to women who have not previously received Tdap vaccine in adulthood. In situations of a higher risk of contracting this infection (i.e. during outbreaks or extensive travel to areas of outbreaks during the latter part of pregnancy), pertussis containing vaccine should be considered for pregnant women in the second half of pregnancy who have not previously received Tdap vaccine in adulthood.

Pertussis vaccination in pregnancy is currently under review by NACI. For more information please refer to the *Canadian Immunization Guide*, Evergreen Edition, 2012 at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p04-pert-coqu-eng.php>

When vaccinating individuals, please ensure proper recording of immunizations. This includes completing patients' immunization records as well as recording the vaccine name, lot number, expiry date, dose, route and site of administration in patients' charts. Whenever feasible, please also note the dose number when multiple doses of the same type of vaccine are given.

Please discuss matters of immunization or public health management of pertussis with your Regional Medical Officer of Health as needed.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Alexander Doroshenko, MD, MPH, FFPH(UK), FRCPC
Provincial Medical Officer of Health