

New Jersey Department of Health
Communicable Disease Service
Sample Exposure Notification - Pertussis

Please consult with the LHD and/or NJDOH prior to distribution.
Microsoft® Word version available upon request.

[School/company letterhead]

Dear [parent/guardian/staff]:

We are writing to inform you that a person at [school/company name] has been diagnosed with **Pertussis (whooping cough)**. As a result, [you/your child] **may have been exposed**. Public health officials and [school/company] are working together to help keep the community safe. Please read the information below.

What Is Pertussis?

Pertussis is a contagious illness that causes **severe coughing**. Symptoms usually start like a cold, including runny nose, mild cough, and low fever. After about 1–2 weeks, the cough may become worse and include strong coughing fits; a “whooping” sound when breathing in; vomiting after coughing; and trouble catching breath. The cough can last several weeks. People who have been vaccinated can still get pertussis, but their illness is usually milder and shorter.

What Should I Do?

Regardless of previous vaccination, please **monitor [your child] for symptoms for 21 days after exposure (through [date])**. If a new cough or coughing fits develop, contact a health care provider.

The New Jersey Department of Health recommends preventive antibiotics for people who:

- Live with infants under one year in the household
- Are pregnant (especially in the third trimester)
- Have certain health conditions that increase risk
- Are in close contact with infants, pregnant women, or high-risk individuals

If this applies to your household, please contact your health care provider.

How to Help Prevent the Spread

The best way to prevent pertussis is to get vaccinated. Pertussis vaccination is recommended for everyone.

You can further help prevent illness by washing hands often, covering coughs and sneezes, staying home when sick, and not sharing cups, utensils, or water bottles.

More information about pertussis:

- nj.gov/health/cd/topics/pertussis.shtml
- vaccineinformation.org/diseases/whooping-cough

If you have questions, please contact [Health Department Name/School/Facility] at [phone number].

Sincerely,
[Health Officer / School Administrator / Nurse]