



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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MDHHS warns Michigan residents about increase in pertussis (whooping cough) cases

Families of young children urged to get up to date with immunizations

LANSING, Mich. - The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is calling attention to an increase in cases of pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, and urging individuals to get up to date with vaccinations. Case numbers across the state surpassed last year's reports and are coinciding with a return to pre-pandemic patterns of more cases per year nationally.

Between 2017 and 2019, Michigan averaged 596 cases of pertussis each year. There have already been 830 confirmed or probable cases reported to MDHHS this year as of Oct. 28.

Early symptoms of pertussis can look like a common cold. It can take five to 10 days for symptoms to appear after exposure and sometimes longer. Babies and young children may not cough, but they may have pauses in their breathing (called apnea), which can make their skin look bluish or cause shortness of breath. Later symptoms can consist of uncontrolled coughing fits.

Pertussis is common in the United States. The acute infectious disease can cause serious illness in people of all ages, is more likely to be severe and possibly deadly for infants. The median age of pertussis cases in 2024 is 13 years and 75% of these cases have been in people under the age of 18.

"Vaccinations continue to be our top line of defense against the spread of pertussis," said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, chief medical executive. "With a declining rate of immunizations, we are unfortunately seeing a rise in pertussis and other vaccine preventable diseases statewide. We encourage all Michiganders to stay up to date with their [immunization schedule](#)."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends pertussis vaccine for infants, children, adolescents and people who are pregnant. CDC also recommends a dose of pertussis vaccine for adults who haven't received a dose as an adolescent or adult.

Michigan is continuing to see declining childhood immunization rates, meaning more infants and children are at risk for severe pertussis illnesses. In Michigan, 82.9% of children have received their first dose of Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP) vaccine by the time they are three months old. However, only 65.6% of 19-month-olds received all four recommended doses for DTaP.

For more information on pertussis, visit the [CDC's website](#) and follow the CDC for information on pertussis cases and [outbreaks](#) or [Whooping Cough \(Pertussis\) in Michigan](#).

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