

Dear Colleague:

Your patient may have been exposed to pertussis.

**For Exposed Patients without Symptoms:**

As a precaution to help protect vulnerable individuals, we are recommending antibiotic prophylaxis for this patient if he or she shares a household with a woman who is pregnant or an infant less than 12 months old. Alternatively, we are referring this patient to you because he or she has an immunodeficiency or lives with a person with an immunodeficiency and may require antibiotic prophylaxis to help prevent pertussis.

**For Exposed Patients with Symptoms:**

**For patients coughing less than 21 days:**

1. Collect nasopharyngeal swabs or aspirate for pertussis PCR testing and/or culture.
2. Do not delay treatment with appropriate antibiotics while waiting for laboratory results if there is no alternative diagnosis.
3. Document and communicate all clinical decisions related to pertussis to the school (this includes children for whom you have ruled out pertussis).
4. Strongly consider antibiotic prophylaxis for all household members if a pregnant woman, an infant less than 12 months old, or anyone with an immunodeficiency lives in the household.

**For patients coughing 21 days or more:**

1. Laboratory testing for pertussis is not necessary. CDC does not recommend laboratory testing after 3 weeks of cough since PCR and culture are only sensitive during the first 2 to 3 weeks of cough when bacterial DNA is still present in the nasopharynx.
2. For most patients, antibiotic treatment is not required. Antibiotics are no longer necessary after 21 days of cough, with the following exception: you should treat infants and pregnant women in their third trimester up through 6 weeks after cough onset.
3. The patient is no longer infectious and can return to school.

**For all households:** Ensure everyone is up to date with their pertussis vaccination. For those who aren't, either administer the appropriate vaccine or refer them to [insert contact] for vaccination.

You can find additional clinical and laboratory guidance on the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/index.html>

Should you have any questions or concerns, please call <insert local health department contact here>

Sincerely,