

March 1st, 2019

IMPORTANT - PERTUSSIS OUTBREAK AT MONCTON HIGH SCHOOL (MHS)

Dear parents and school staff,

This letter is to update you on the pertussis situation at your school. In recent weeks, we've had 5 cases of pertussis diagnosed at MHS. Recognizing that this is highly unusual, and that there are likely many other undiagnosed cases in the school, I have **officially declared a pertussis outbreak at your school**.

Pertussis is highly contagious. It can cause a severe cough that can last for months, but for infants under 1 year of age the disease can be deadly.

As a member of this community, I ask your collaboration by doing the following to help control the spread:

- **If you / your child currently have a cough, please see a healthcare provider as soon as possible.** Do not assume that it is merely a cold or the flu. A simple test can be done to confirm if you have pertussis or not. Mention that you are from the MHS community and that there have been many cases of pertussis. Wear a mask when arriving to the clinic, avoid infants & pregnant women.
- **Please verify your / your child's immunization records.** In addition to routine childhood vaccines, an adolescent booster dose of pertussis ("Tdap") is required and is provided through school-based immunization clinics in NB in Grade 7. One adult booster dose at age 18 or later is also required. Please ensure that you / your child have received these doses.

Based on our immunization program's statistics, up to 30% of students have not received this adolescent booster dose. Therefore, to encourage students to receive this dose, we will be holding an immunization clinic at the school on March 20th and in case of school closure, clinic will be held on March 21st. Consent forms will be sent to parents after March break (on March 11th). Please complete and return the form to the school before March 14th.

If you are unsure if your child has received their adolescent dose, please contact your usual provider or contact your local public health office at 856-3502 or by email at vaccine@gnb.ca

Everyone must do their part to help control the spread of infectious diseases. I thank you for your collaboration in this matter.



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Medical Officer of Health, East region