

# North Putnam Community School Corporation

## School Health and Nursing Services

Bainbridge Elem. School  
522-6233

Roachdale Elem. School  
522-1732

North Putnam Middle School  
522-2900

North Putnam High School  
522-6282

Marilynn Unger, RN  
NPCSC Elementary School Nurse  
Bev Richardson, RN  
NPMS/NPHS School Nurse

April 28, 2010

Dear Parent, Guardians and Students,

The Indiana State Department of Health and the Indiana Department of Education have asked that school systems provide important information to parents and guardians of students about pertussis (whooping cough) and the vaccines available to prevent this serious illness.

Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. Pertussis is spread by infectious airborne droplets created when a person who is infected coughs or sneezes. Infants and young children are typically vaccinated against pertussis, but the vaccine loses effectiveness as children get older and vaccinated children can become infected.

Pertussis causes severe coughing fits. During the fits, the affected person may be short of breath and appear distressed. The coughing fit may be followed by vomiting and exhaustion. Young infants are at highest risk for developing complications like pneumonia and seizures from the disease.

Adolescents and adults who have been previously vaccinated may have a milder case of the disease, but they can still spread pertussis to others. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a routine pertussis booster for all 11-12 year old children and for anyone older who did not have a booster at 11-12 years of age. The pertussis booster (Tdap) is combined with tetanus toxoid and takes the place of one tetanus booster shot. The Tdap vaccine can be given as soon as one year after a regular tetanus booster.

**Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, the Tdap vaccine will be required for all students in grades 6-12. All students entering grades 6-12 will need to have a record of this immunization on file with the immunization being given on or after the child's 10th birthday. The school system will need a signed written statement from a medical provider as proof of the vaccination or proof of immunization will need to be in the state immunization registry (CHIRP).**

The Putnam County Department of Health (653-5210), as well as most private healthcare providers, offer this vaccine. Please talk to your child's healthcare provider about the Tdap vaccine and do not wait until August to obtain the vaccination for your child as appointments are usually booked in August. Once the vaccination is obtained, you can send verification to the school nurse and she will enter that information into the school system's health data base as verification that your child's immunizations are up-to-date and meet ISDH/IDOE immunization requirements.

Additional resources for families to obtain information about pertussis disease include the following websites:

The Indiana State Department of Health (<http://www.in.gov/isdh/22191.htm>)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pertussis/default.htm>)

*Please talk with your child's healthcare provider about pertussis disease and vaccination.*

Yours in Good Health,

Marilynn Unger, RN, Elementary School Nurse  
Bev Richardson, RN, NPMS/NPHS School Nurse