

PRESS RELEASE –For Immediate Release

Date: July 28, 2010 To: From: Jane Nyquist, Steele County Public Health, 444-7661 Re: Pertussis Clinics
Steele County Media

Pertussis Clinics to be held in Steele County

A number of pertussis (also called whooping cough) cases have been reported in Owatonna and the surrounding communities. Pertussis is one of the most common vaccine-preventable diseases in the country. In the last two months, there have been 29 cases of pertussis reported in Steele County and the surrounding area. The median age of the cases is 9 years old, ranging from 7 months to 36 years. To date, there have been over 400 cases of pertussis reported in Minnesota for 2010.

In recent years, cases of pertussis have been mostly reported in persons 9 years old and older, including adults. Pertussis can be serious in any age group. However, it is sometimes milder in adults and older children who, without knowing, can pass on the disease to infants who are at risk for severe complications.

At first pertussis resembles a common cold, with sneezing, runny nose, fever and a mild cough. But after 1 or 2 weeks the severe coughing spells begin. Pertussis is most severe in infants less than 1 year old. Many infants who get pertussis catch it from their older brothers and sisters, or from parents who might not even know they have the disease.

The most common complication from pertussis is pneumonia. Pertussis causes about 10-20 deaths each year in the United States.

As a community we need to take this disease seriously. So often there are events in life that we feel we can do nothing about, but this is not one of those events. We can do something about the spread of pertussis.

Pertussis is treatable but we want to prevent this disease. The best way to prevent pertussis is to: 1) Avoid close contact with others who are coughing or otherwise ill;

- 2) Wash your hands often;
- 3) Stay at home if ill;
- 4) Cover your cough with a tissue or cough into your sleeve;
- 5) Seek medical attention if you develop pertussis-like symptoms or have been exposed to someone with pertussis; and 6)

Get Vaccinated.

Most children have been vaccinated for pertussis, however, protection decreases over time. Studies have shown that the immunity from the vaccine decreases after 3-5 years from the last vaccination, which is usually given before kindergarten. Therefore, most adolescents and adults are at risk for pertussis.

Pertussis vaccine is now available for adolescents and adults and is given as part of the tetanus-diphtheria booster. This vaccination is called Tdap. All people 10 yrs. and older should receive Tdap especially those in the 10-12 age group or those who are around infants less than 12 months of age. Parents of both these age groups should also consider Tdap.

Pertussis vaccine is now available in combination with tetanus and diphtheria vaccine for nearly everyone over the age of 2 months. There are many variables regarding which vaccine and when you should receive the vaccine so check with a health care provider or public health office for clarification.

In August, Steele County Public Health has scheduled “extra” immunization clinics targeting pertussis prevention vaccinations for Minnesota Vaccine For Children (MNVFC) eligible children and under and uninsured adults. These clinics will be held at the Steele County Public Health Office, 635 Florence Ave., Owatonna on August 5, 12 and 26 from 1-6 p.m. Please call 507-444-7650, 507-583-2283 or 507-684-2211 for eligibility questions, an appointment or with any other questions or concerns. Walk-ins will be accepted. The regular monthly immunization clinic will be held as usual on August 19, 1-6 p.m. Please bring your immunization record with you for any of these clinics.

The Owatonna Clinic has vaccinations available in the shot clinic during the hours of 8-5 on Monday through Friday. Please call ahead to schedule an appointment at 451-1120.

To access more pertussis information go to the [Minnesota Department of Health](#).