



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pertussis (whooping cough) cases identified in Eau Claire County

Babies under 1 and people who are immunocompromised most at risk for serious illness

Eau Claire, August 28, 2024 — Several cases of pertussis, or whooping cough, have been identified in Eau Claire County. Whooping cough is a very contagious respiratory illness that can cause coughing that lasts for weeks or months.

The Health Department recommends county residents know the symptoms of whooping cough, and seek medical attention if they have symptoms or suspect they've been exposed to someone with whooping cough. If you have symptoms, talk to your doctor about getting tested for whooping cough. Starting treatment early is very important. If whooping cough is treated early with antibiotics, it can make the infection less serious.

At first, a person with whooping cough may seem like they have a cold. Early symptoms may include a low-grade fever and runny nose, and a slight cough. After about a week, the cough gets worse. The cough may cause difficulty breathing, vomiting, apnea, and/or needing to take a deep breath. Babies may not have a cough. Instead, they may stop breathing for several seconds. Or they may look like they are gasping for air.

Whooping cough affects people of all ages, but it can be serious or deadly for babies younger than 1. It can cause pneumonia, and about half of all babies with whooping cough need to be treated in a hospital. That's why it's important that pregnant people and everyone around the baby are up to date with their [whooping cough vaccines](#). Talk with your doctor if you're not sure if you or your family members have received a whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine.

Whooping cough cases have been increasing in Wisconsin and in the U.S. in the past few months. Currently, there are three times as many cases in the U.S. at this time compared to the similar time period in 2023. As of August 8, Wisconsin had 278 confirmed cases, compared to a total of 51 cases reported in 2023. Fifteen infants in Wisconsin have been identified with whooping cough this year.

To stop whooping cough and other respiratory illnesses from spreading, practice good hygiene:

- Stay home when you're sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands, if you don't have a tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.