

Elgin St. Thomas Site

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From the Office of Dr. Ninh Tran, Medical Officer of Health, Southwestern Public Health

Pertussis Cases in Elgin County Continue to Rise

In December, Southwestern Public Health distributed a [health advisory](#) to inform you about the increasing number of pertussis cases in our region. Since December 8, 2022, there has been an increase of 21 cases with the total case count being 58 cases in our region, prompting our health unit to issue a new advisory.

Please note:

- 62% of all cases were under the age of 4 with 25% under the age of one year.
- 72 % of cases were completely unvaccinated.
- 94% of cases under the age of 4 were completely unvaccinated.
- 90% of cases reside in the Aylmer and Bayham municipalities.

Consider Pertussis Diagnosis

For anyone who has the following symptoms, regardless of vaccination status:

- A paroxysmal cough of any duration.
- A cough lasting 2 weeks or longer.
- A cough with inspiratory "whoop".
- A cough ending in vomiting or gagging.
- Apnea or cyanosis without the characteristic paroxysmal cough, especially in infants.
- A cough in a person who has been exposed to pertussis.

Test for Pertussis

- Early signs and symptoms of pertussis are often non-specific, making it difficult to determine clinically who has pertussis in the earliest stages.
- Patients with signs and symptoms consistent with pertussis should be tested by PCR to confirm the diagnosis.
- Ideally, specimens should be collected during the first two to three weeks of cough.

- Collect a NP swab or NP aspirate for PCR testing using a pertussis test kit (colourless medium). **Do not use viral transport medium (pink).**
- To order test kits: [click here](#)
- Specimen collection instructions: [click here](#)

Treat Pertussis

- Give antimicrobial therapy to patients with a highly suspected or confirmed pertussis.
- These macrolides are equally effective for treatment or prophylaxis of pertussis: azithromycin, clarithromycin, and erythromycin.
- Patients are considered to be non-infectious after completing the fifth day of appropriate antimicrobial treatment.

Report All Suspected & Confirmed Cases

- Call 1-800-922-0096 ext. 1232 or 3500
- Fax a report to 519-631-1682. For a copy of the report form: [click here](#).

Further Reading

- Refer to our [August pertussis update](#) for further guidance around treatment or prophylaxis.

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