

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 9, 2012

Contact: Karrey Britt
Communications Coordinator
Office: (785) 856-7362

Pertussis cases persist in Douglas County

(Lawrence, KS) – The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department urges residents to take precautions against pertussis, also called whooping cough, as it has seen a resurgence of activity especially in the Baldwin City area.

The health department reported 23 cases of pertussis in October, and it is investigating additional cases. So far this year, there have been 84 cases compared to 17 cases in 2011. The department has responded by providing treatment and prevention recommendations to the ill, their possible contacts and area physicians. It has been working closely with local school districts, Kansas University and Baker University.

Statewide, there have been 588 pertussis cases so far this year, compared to 52 in 2011.

Pertussis is a contagious, respiratory disease caused by bacteria. It is spread by coughing or sneezing in close contact with others. The symptoms of pertussis begin much like a common cold:

- Runny nose or congestion
- Sneezing
- Occasionally a mild cough or fever
- Infants and children with the disease may cough violently and rapidly, over and over, until the air is gone from their lungs and they're forced to inhale with a loud "whooping" sound.

In rare cases (one out of 200), pertussis can cause death, especially in children age 1 or younger.

To stop the spread of pertussis, the health department recommends:

- Contacting your physician by phone if you have any symptoms.
- Be sure to take all medication if recommended and isolate yourself.
- Stay home when you are ill.
- Cover your cough.
- Be sure that you and your children are up to date on immunizations for pertussis vaccine (Dtap or Tdap).

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department offers pertussis vaccines through its walk-in clinic, 200 Maine. Some adults may be eligible to receive the pertussis vaccine at a reduced rate if they meet certain income guidelines. For clinic hours, visit the health department's website at www.ldchealth.org/contact.

If you have any questions, please contact your physician or the health department at **(785) 843-0721** and ask for a communicable disease nurse.

-30-

Healthy People Build Strong Communities
www.ldchealth.org

