



# Health Alert

## Increase in Pertussis Cases

10/23/24

### Current Situation

- According to [CDC Pertussis Surveillance and Trends](#), reported cases of pertussis increased across the United States in 2024. The number of reported cases this year is higher than what was seen at the same time in 2019, before the pandemic.
- In California, 1,156 cases of pertussis were reported from January 1, 2024, through October 12, 2024, through the [National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System](#). This is more than a threefold increase compared to the same period in 2023 statewide.
- In the City of Berkeley, 37 cases of Pertussis were reported from January 1, 2024, through October 22, 2024. Only 2 Pertussis cases were reported for the entire year in Berkeley in 2023. The number of cases so far in 2024 is three times higher than those reported in 2019, before the pandemic.
- The ages of Pertussis cases reported this year in Berkeley range from 8 to 23 years old, with most cases occurring in 16-18 year-olds.
- Several cases have been identified in Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) schools, and among University of California, Berkeley students. Currently, there is an outbreak among BUSD high school-aged students with the first case reported on October 1, 2024, and with symptoms starting as early as mid-September.

### Diagnosis and Testing

- Clinical case definition of Pertussis:
  - In the absence of a more likely diagnosis, a cough illness lasting  $\geq 2$  weeks, with at least one of the following signs or symptoms:
    - Paroxysms of coughing; OR
    - Inspiratory whoop; OR
    - Post-tussive vomiting; OR
    - Apnea (with or without cyanosis)
- Consider pertussis regardless of age in patients with persistent cough. Symptoms are generally milder in teens and adults, especially in those who have received Tdap.
- Please test siblings of patients suspected of Pertussis and encourage family members within households to get tested.
- Consider pertussis **even in recently vaccinated people** when evaluating patients with symptoms compatible with pertussis. Immunity after immunization wanes within a few years.



## Treatment

- Initiate antibiotic treatment **prior to obtaining test results**, especially in infants and pregnant women or those who are in close contact with them. Azithromycin is preferred because of efficacy and compliance.
- Provide antibiotic prophylaxis to household contacts, caregivers, and other persons who have had direct contact with respiratory, oral, or nasal secretions and aerosols from a symptomatic case, especially when there is an infant or pregnant woman in the home. The dosage and duration for antibiotic prophylaxis is the same as treatment and should not be shortened.

## Prevention

- Instruct patients with pertussis **to stay home from school or daycare until they have received 5 days of antibiotics and to avoid contact with infants and pregnant women.**
- Encourage patients and families to stay up to date on Pertussis vaccinations this is especially important for pregnant individuals, infants under 1 years of age, caregivers and household members of infants and attendees and workers in childcare.

## Additional Information

- To help us with the disease investigation, please inform your patients that they may be contacted by someone from Berkeley Public Health for an interview.

## Resources

- Center for Disease Control (CDC):  
<https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/index.html>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/php/surveillance/index.html>  
<https://wonder.cdc.gov/nndss/static/2024/41/2024-41-table990.html>
- City of Berkeley Public Health Division:  
<https://berkeleyca.gov/safety-health/public-health>  
<https://berkeleyca.gov/safety-health/public-health/provider-resources>  
<https://berkeleyca.gov/safety-health/public-health/public-health-alerts-and-advisories>
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH):  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/pages/immunization/pertussis.aspx>  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Immunization/PertussisQuicksheet.pdf>