



# WARREN COUNTY COMBINED HEALTH DISTRICT

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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**To:** Area News Media  
**From:** Duane Stansbury, R.S., M.P.H., Health Commissioner  
**Re:** Media Release

## **Don't Wait To Vaccinate: Protect your pre-teen from whooping cough.**

Whooping cough—or pertussis—is a serious and very contagious respiratory disease that can cause long, violent coughing fits and in some cases the characteristic “whooping” sound that follows when a person gasps for air. This disease can be easily spread between children, especially in the school setting.

Whooping cough has been on the rise in the past couple of years, particularly in pre-teens and teens. In 2009, a quarter of the 16,858 cases of pertussis reported in the United States were among 10- through 19-year-olds.

Most children get vaccinated against whooping cough as babies, a booster shot before starting kindergarten or first grade and then another required dose before entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade. You don't have to wait until entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade before getting the booster. To boost immunity, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend the Tdap vaccine starting at 11 years old. It is important for pre-teens to get the vaccine during this time as protection from the previous vaccinations wear off, leaving them at risk for infection that can cause prolonged illness, disruptions in school and activities, and even hospitalization.

Check with your physician or your local health department if you do not have a physician, to see if your child can get this important vaccination. With this dose, they will be protected earlier from this serious illness and already have the required Tdap immunization needed to enter 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

To learn about other recommended vaccinations for pre-teens, visit our website at [www.wcchd.com](http://www.wcchd.com) or CDC's adolescent vaccine website at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens) .