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Public Health Director

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To: Parents of Lansing Soccer Team Members
From: Carol Mohler, RN Tompkins County Health Department
Date: August 31, 2006
Re: Pertussis

Pertussis cases have occurred in the Lansing area in middle school aged children through adult aged individuals. Pertussis cases were identified in soccer team members during May through early July. Pertussis is a severe coughing illness that can last for three months. People of all ages can get pertussis and it may be life-threatening for infants.

Intimate contacts (defined as persons within a 3-foot radius of a pertussis case as well as hugging, kissing, sharing food or drink with a case) are at most risk of contracting pertussis from someone who has it. Therefore the Tompkins County Health Department recommends that you give the following messages to your child to reduce their risk of acquiring pertussis.

- *Use your own drinking and eating utensils.*
- *Don't share cups, glasses, soda cans, bottles, etc. with anyone. Therefore, sports team members should each have their own water bottle that is not shared with anyone or use one time disposable paper cups at all times.*
- *Don't share anything that has been in or on your mouth with anyone else such as cigarettes, chapstick, or lipstick.*
- *Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your hands when sneezing or coughing. Throw away the tissue and wash your hands.*

In addition:

- *Stay at home if you have a cough and be evaluated by your health care provider.*
- *Be immunized with pertussis vaccine, if you are eligible.*

If you or your child have a cough, stay at home and contact your doctor for a medical evaluation.

A special nose swab test will probably be done, followed by antibiotic prescription. Be sure that anyone who is coughing stays at home, out of sports practice and events, school, work, or camp, and away from friends and extended family, until five days of the antibiotic are completed.

Pertussis Vaccination Now Available For Children Aged 10 – 18, Their Families, and School and Sports Staff

In order to provide the maximum protection to sports participants, their families, and sports staff, the Tompkins County Health Department recommends that individuals aged 10 – 18 and all adults through age 64 consider being vaccinated once against pertussis. Contact your health care provider to determine your eligibility for the pertussis vaccine.

For further information about pertussis, call Carol Mohler, RN or Karen Bishop, RN at the Tompkins County Health Department at 274-6604.

