



Orange County Pertussis Update
October 24, 2014

A pertussis case has been confirmed in a Carrboro High student. A contact at Culbreth is currently considered to be a “suspect” case. Close contacts to the confirmed case have been contacted with the provider guidance below.

For Exposed Patients without Symptoms: As a precaution to protect vulnerable individuals, we are recommending antibiotic prophylaxis for this patient if he or she shares a household with a woman who is pregnant or an infant less than 12 months old. Alternatively, this patient is being referred to you because he or she has an immunodeficiency or lives with a person with an immunodeficiency and may require antibiotic prophylaxis to help prevent pertussis.

For Exposed Patients with Symptoms: Orange County Health Department recommends following these CDC guidelines:

For patients coughing <21 days:

1. Collect nasopharyngeal swabs or aspirate for pertussis PCR testing and/or culture.
2. Do not delay treatment with appropriate antibiotics while waiting for laboratory results if there is if no alternative diagnosis.
3. Document and communicate all clinical decisions related to pertussis to the school (this includes children for whom pertussis has been ruled out).
4. Strongly consider antibiotic prophylaxis for all household members if a pregnant woman, an infant less than 12 months old, or anyone with a weakened immune system lives in the household.
5. Notify the Health Department

For patients coughing ≥21 days:

1. Testing for pertussis is not recommended. Testing after 3 weeks of cough is of limited benefit since PCR and culture are only sensitive during the first 2-3 weeks of cough when bacterial DNA is still present in the nasopharynx.
2. Treatment is no longer necessary after 21 days, with the following exception: infants and pregnant women in their third trimester should be treated up through 6 weeks after cough onset.
3. The patient is no longer infectious and may return to school.
4. Notify the Health Department of the possible case.

For treatment options and dosages, see previous pertussis alerts at www.orangecountync.gov/health/provideronly