



SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR



CATHERINE D. TORRES, M.D., DOH CABINET SECRETARY

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Dear Foster Parent:

**Pertussis (whooping cough) is very contagious and can cause serious illness—especially in infants too young to be fully vaccinated. Pertussis vaccines are recommended for children, teens, and adults, including pregnant women.**

The number of pertussis cases in New Mexico is increasing. Between January 1 and June 8, 2012, the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) identified 231 confirmed and probable cases of pertussis (whooping cough) statewide. Infants have the highest risk of being hospitalized or having other serious complications including death from pertussis. This year in New Mexico, 21 infants have been diagnosed with pertussis, 9 infants have been hospitalized and there has been one fatality. Family members and caretakers are frequently the source of infection in infants.

To protect infants, it is important to vaccinate all those around them; a process referred to as “cocooning.”

DOH recommends that anyone caring for or visiting an infant (less than 1 year of age) receive a single dose of the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis) vaccine. It is safe to receive during or after the 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy.

**Where can you get Tdap?**

- Your health care provider--call to be sure that they have vaccines for adults.
- Many pharmacies can also provide Tdap and can bill your insurance for it. Call your pharmacy to find out if they provide vaccines.
- If you are uninsured, or your health care provider does not provide vaccines, you can go to your local public health office.

**For more information:**

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-td-tdap.pdf>

We recognize and appreciate that you are on the front lines of caring for New Mexico’s children, and as such we wanted to share some critical information to ensure the health and well-being of these children. Thank You!

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