

## Persistent Pertussis Activity in Region

August 20, 2024

Durham, Peterborough and HKPR regions have seen a higher rate of pertussis (whooping cough) cases over the summer months.

**Parents and guardians, we are urging you to make sure your children's immunizations are up to date. Please get any needed vaccinations, including the pertussis vaccination before school begins. School staff, we are also encouraging you to make sure your immunizations are up to date.**

### What Is Pertussis?

Pertussis is a bacterial respiratory infection. Pertussis usually starts like a cold, with a runny nose. After a few days, the cough begins. Coughing may be followed by a “whoop” sound before the next breath. The coughing can be so aggressive that children vomit or have trouble breathing. The cough is usually severe for 2 to 3 weeks, but it can last up to 2 months.

### Preventing Pertussis:

Vaccination is the best measure to prevent a pertussis infection. **Pertussis vaccines are required in Ontario for children and adolescents to attend school.** The pertussis vaccine is publicly funded and recommended at the following ages:

- children ages 2, 4, 6, 18 months and 4 years,
- adolescent booster at 14-16 years,
- adult booster (once),
- with every pregnancy, at 27-32 weeks

### Getting the vaccine:

1. Review immunization records online or speak to your health care provider to see if you or your child is eligible for a dose of the pertussis vaccine. Review records for [Peterborough](#), [Durham](#), and [HKPR](#).
2. Contact your health care provider or local public health unit if you don't have a family doctor or nurse practitioner to book an appointment to receive a vaccine. Book an appointment for [Peterborough](#), [Durham](#), and [HKPR](#).

### Experiencing Symptoms?

If you or your child becomes ill with symptoms of pertussis, stay home, seek medical attention, and take this letter with you to your healthcare provider. Diagnosed cases of pertussis are treated with antibiotics.

### For questions or to book an appointment, please call:

Durham Region Health Department: 905-666-6242 or [book online](#)

Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge Health Unit: 1-866-888-4577 ext. 1507 or [book online](#)

Peterborough Public Health: 705-743-1000 ext. 331 or [book online](#)