

BLASTFAX

**A Message from the Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health
Regarding Pertussis**

As you may be aware, a large pertussis epidemic is currently occurring in California. Public health officials have noted a four-fold increase in the number of reported pertussis cases compared to last year, including five fatal cases among infants. There have also been recent news articles regarding increased pertussis activity or outbreaks in Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon and South Carolina. However, it's important to know that while a number of states are reporting an increase in the number of pertussis cases in 2010, other states are reporting less pertussis activity in comparison to this time last year.

So far this year, in Georgia, the Division of Public Health has not noted an increase in reported pertussis cases during 2010 compared to 2009. To date, during 2010, pertussis cases occurring throughout the state, are mostly sporadic in nature (i.e. not outbreak-associated), and are primarily being seen among infants < 12 months of age (42% of cases) followed by children 5 - 10 years of age (21%). This age distribution is consistent with what is being reported nationally.

Clinicians represent the frontline in pertussis control, and we are at a period of heightened awareness, therefore, the public health community would like to offer the following reminders about pertussis prevention, diagnosis, and treatment:

- ◆ **Make sure patients of all ages are up-to-date on pertussis-containing vaccines, including a Tdap booster for those 10-64 years of age. (see immunization schedules at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/default.htm>)**
- ◆ **Consider the diagnosis of pertussis in patients with cough illness regardless of vaccination history. The diagnosis of pertussis is often delayed or missed. In young infants, atypical presentation is common – the cough may be minimal or absent and the primary symptom can be apnea.**
- ◆ **Test for pertussis in patients presenting with illness compatible with pertussis, using appropriate diagnostic tests. See the following link for guidance. http://www.aphl.org/aphlprograms/infectious/Documents/Pertussis_Brochure-Final3.pdf**
- ◆ **Treat suspected cases promptly and appropriately to decrease transmission, as pertussis may progress particularly in young infants. Please refer to the pertussis section of the 2009 Red Book beginning on page 506 for appropriate treatment procedures. Those with an online Red Book subscription can go to the following link. <http://aapredbook.aappublications.org/>**
- ◆ **Tdap vaccine is currently available in local health departments at no cost (regardless of insurance coverage) for patients 10-64 years of age.**
- ◆ **Please notify your local Health Department or call 866-PUB-HLTH if you identify a suspected or confirmed case of pertussis.**

For any questions please contact 404-657-2588 and ask for Dr. Jessica Tuttle, Dr. Julie Gabel or Ebony Thomas. Thank you for your assistance.