

Date: April 30, 2024

Notice to St. Stephen Protomartyr Ukrainian Catholic Church.

Alberta Health Services (AHS) has been made aware that an individual with pertussis recently attended the St. Stephen Protomartyr Ukrainian Catholic Church while infectious. Pertussis cases, and a risk of infection to others, were present at this location during April 7, 2024, to April 21, 2024.

### **What is pertussis?**

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough or the “100-day cough,” is a vaccine-preventable disease caused by bacteria that infect the lungs and airways. Immunization with pertussis vaccine is the best way to prevent severe outcomes from the disease. Pertussis can be treated with antibiotics. Sadly, even with treatment, pertussis can be deadly. In Canada, one to four deaths are related to pertussis each year. These deaths are most often in infants who are too young to be immunized or children who are not fully immunized.

Pertussis usually begins with common cold-like symptoms such as mild fever, runny nose, red watery eyes, and cough. Symptoms can appear 5 to 21 days after exposure to a pertussis case and usually occurs about 7 to 10 days after exposure.

Pertussis is spread easily when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The coughing usually becomes more severe, causing serious coughing fits that can lead to choking or vomiting. The coughing can be so intense that a ‘whooping’ sound happens when an infected person tries to catch their breath. Children can also be infected by rubbing their eyes or mouth after they touch toys or objects handled by a person infected with pertussis.

### **What should I do if I think I have pertussis?**

**If you suspect you are sick with pertussis, please stay home from work, school, daycare, or other places such as gatherings where you might be in contact with other people.**

Seek early medical assessment first by calling your primary care provider or Health Link at 811 for potential treatment. It is recommended that people with pertussis stay home until they have completed five days of treatment with the appropriate antibiotics.

Individuals or families with pertussis may receive a phone call from AHS to provide more information about how to help prevent further spread of pertussis. If needed, testing can be done to confirm pertussis. Preventive antibiotics may be offered to household members and other higher risk contacts.

Early treatment helps prevent the spread of pertussis to others. Importantly, while antibiotics help prevent spread, they may not be very effective for treatment once the infection has started; prevention with immunization is the most important way to minimize the impact of pertussis.

## What can I do to protect myself and my family from pertussis?

Pertussis is a vaccine-preventable bacterial infection. Immunization is the most important step we can take to prevent severe illness, particularly in small children.

Pertussis immunization is safe and effective against preventing severe illness. Being immunized is the best method to protect your family and limit the spread of pertussis, along with regular hand washing, covering your mouth when coughing, staying home when sick, and remembering not to share drinks, food, or cutlery. In Alberta, pertussis immunization is free for all children less than 18 years of age, people who are in the third trimester of pregnancy (27 weeks+), and adults who have not had a dTap booster in the past 10 years. Visit [ahs.ca/immunize](https://ahs.ca/immunize) to learn more.

## Where can I get more information about pertussis?

Albertans can text 'Whooping Cough' to 88111 to receive free information on whooping cough symptoms, treatment and how to prevent it from spreading.

- [Pertussis \(whooping cough\) information at ahs.ca/immunize](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/topic/immunization/pages/whooping-cough.aspx)  
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/topic/immunization/pages/whooping-cough.aspx>
- [Pertussis \(whooping cough\) immunization schedule at alberta.ca](https://www.alberta.ca/immunization-routine-schedule.aspx)  
<https://www.alberta.ca/immunization-routine-schedule.aspx>

For more information about vaccines, to check if you are up to date on your vaccines, or to book a vaccine appointment, contact Health Link at 811 or visit [ahs.ca/immunize](https://ahs.ca/immunize).

Thank you for your attention to this important health issue.

Sincerely,

Francesco Rizzuti  
Provincial Lead Medical Officer of Health, Emergency/Disaster Management & Medical Officer  
of Health, Calgary Zone • Provincial Population & Public Health  
Alberta Health Services