



FOR RELEASE

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Pertussis outbreak in Yukon prompts warning

WHITEHORSE—Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health is advising Yukoners to watch for signs and symptoms of pertussis (whooping cough) following laboratory confirmation of two cases in Yukon. The cases are unrelated and occurred in young adults.

Pertussis is spread through coughing or sneezing, or by touching any surface that's been contaminated and not properly cleaned. Symptoms typically take from seven to 10 days to develop.

Early symptoms are similar to a common cold: runny nose, watery eyes, a low fever and a mild cough. Coughing then becomes severe enough to cause breathing problems or make people gag or throw up. Coughs often end in a "whooping" sound, which gives the disease its common name. Symptoms can last for six to twelve weeks.

Pertussis is considered a vaccine-preventable disease and immunization remains the best way to protect against infection. Canada sees from one to three deaths from pertussis every year, usually in under-immunized infants.

Anyone unsure of their immunization status can contact the Whitehorse Health Centre or their community health centre for immunization information. Individuals who think they may have pertussis, or who have come into contact with the disease, should call the 811 line, contact their family physician, their health centre or visit the emergency department at Whitehorse General Hospital.

Learn more: Pertussis

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