

November 13, 2019

Office of Health Services

Good Afternoon Students, Faculty and Staff,

Health Services received notification from a county health department that some of you may have been exposed to pertussis (whooping cough) between 10/23/19 and 11/8/19. Pertussis is an infection that affects the airways, and it can easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Pertussis can cause a severe cough that lasts for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits and/or vomiting. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be very dangerous for babies and people with weakened immune systems. Family members with pertussis, especially siblings and parents, can spread pertussis to babies. The person who has a confirmed case of pertussis was in multiple locations on campus during the time of exposure.

Recommendations from the Health Department:

1. If you have a cough as described above, please seek medical attention from Health Services or your medical provider. Please inform them that you may have been exposed to pertussis.
2. If anyone in your household (here or back at home) are diagnosed with pertussis by a medical provider, NOTIFY Health Services on campus as soon as possible.
3. If you have been seen by Health Services and referred to a medical provider, a note MUST be obtained from the provider and returned to Health Services. The note must state that pertussis was confirmed or was clear of pertussis.
4. If you have anyone living in your household that is pregnant, a baby under 12 months of age or a weakened immune system, consult with your physician. Inform the physician that there was a possible exposure at Lincoln College.

Please make sure your vaccinations are up-to-date. Protection against pertussis from the childhood vaccine, DtaP, decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, should get a pertussis booster shot call "Tdap" to help protect themselves and babies near or around them.

For your convenience, I have attached a letter explaining that you may have been exposed to pertussis, should you choose to see your medical provider.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Health Services @ 217-735-7340 or dstephenson@lincolncollege.edu.

Thank you



Diane Stephenson RN BSN
Director of Health Services
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Dear Colleague:

Your patient may have been exposed to pertussis. The Logan County Health Department, has given the following guidelines. A close contact is one who is defined as sharing a 3 feet of air space for a minimum of 10 minutes. Lincoln College has recently had a confirmed case of pertussis. The person was on campus 10/23/19 thru 11/8/19. That person was in multiple locations on campus, so it is difficult to know exactly who may have had close contact.

For patients coughing < 21 days:

1. Collect nasopharyngeal swabs or aspirate for pertussis PCR testing and/or culture.
2. Do not delay treatment with appropriate antibiotics while waiting for laboratory results, if there is no alternative diagnosis.
3. Strongly consider antibiotic prophylaxis for all household member if a pregnant woman, an infant less than 12 months old, or anyone with a weakened immune system lives in the household.

For patients coughing > 21 days:

1. Laboratory testing for pertussis is not necessary. CDC does not recommend laboratory testing after 3 weeks of cough since PCR and culture are only sensitive during the first 2 to 3 weeks of cough when bacterial DNA is still present in the nasopharynx.
2. For most patients, antibiotic treatment is not required. Antibiotics are no longer necessary after 21 days of cough, with the following exception: you should treat infants and pregnant women in their third trimester up through 6 weeks after cough onset.
3. The patient is no longer considered infectious and can return to school.

You can find additional clinical and laboratory guidance on the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/index.html>

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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