

Jon Doemel, County Executive  
Doug Gieryn, Director/Health Officer

health@winnebagoountywi.gov  
Facebook: @WinnebagoHealth  
winnebagoountywi.gov/health



112 Otter Avenue  
Oshkosh, WI 54903-2808  
Phone: 920-232-3000  
211 N Commercial Street  
Neenah, WI 54956  
Phone: 920-727-2894

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Pertussis (whooping cough) cases circulating in Winnebago County**

*Babies under 1, pregnant women, and people who are immunocompromised most at risk for serious illness.*

**Winnebago County, WI (September 30, 2024)** - Pertussis, more commonly known as whooping cough, is circulating in our community. Pertussis cases have been increasing in Wisconsin and in the U.S. in the past few months. As of September 30, 2024, Winnebago County had 21 confirmed cases, compared to only 1 case in 2023.

Bacteria causes pertussis and easily spreads from person to person. You can get pertussis by coming into contact with an infected person's saliva. For example, when they talk, cough, or sneeze.

Winnebago County Public Health recommends residents know the symptoms of pertussis and contact your medical provider if they have symptoms or suspect they've been exposed to someone with pertussis. Starting treatment early is very important. Please see a healthcare provider about testing and treatment.

**Infected people can spread pertussis up to three weeks after the cough begins if they are not treated with the appropriate antibiotics.** If pertussis is treated early with antibiotics, it can make the infection less serious in addition to reducing the risk of spreading the infection.

Initial symptoms to watch for may be similar to the common cold and can last for one to two weeks:

- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Low-grade fever (between 99.5°F and 100.3°F)
- Mild occasional cough

Symptoms can progress to an uncontrollable, violent cough that makes it hard to breathe. After coughing, someone with pertussis may need to take deep breaths causing a "whooping" sound.

**Who Is At Risk:** Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against whooping cough. Pertussis affects people of all ages, but it can be serious or result in hospitalization for babies under 1, pregnant women, and immunocompromised individuals. Older siblings, parents, or caregivers who might not know they have the disease can spread it to babies before symptoms appear. It usually takes five to ten days for symptoms to appear after exposure to the bacteria that causes pertussis. As a result, extra caution should be taken around infants who are most at risk for a serious infection and are not yet eligible to receive the vaccine.

To check if you or your loved ones are up to date on your vaccinations that protect against pertussis, please contact your provider or check the [Wisconsin Immunization Registry](#). Winnebago County Public Health does offer the DTaP and Tdap vaccines for those who are eligible. For more information on the Vaccine for Children Program eligibility (VFC) and VFC providers, please visit our website: [www.winnebagoountywi.gov/health](http://www.winnebagoountywi.gov/health) or call: 920-232-3000.

#### **Media Contact:**

Wanda Tracy  
Multimedia and Public Relations Coordinator  
920-232-3352  
wtracy@winnebagoountywi.gov