



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Michael Hill *Health Agency Director*

Penny Borenstein, MD, MPH *Health Officer/Public Health Director*

PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

Date: July 1, 2019

Contact: Christine Gaiger, PHN, Communicable Disease Program Manager
805-781-5577, cgaiger@co.slo.ca.us

Pertussis: Be Alert for Illness and Report Suspect Cases ***Gather specimens for PCR, not serology***

Following the recent confirmation of several cases of pertussis in SLO County, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department is asking providers to be alert for illness suggestive of pertussis and contact the Public Health Department regarding any cases that meet the clinical case definition or are PCR-positive. In addition, the Public Health Department reminds health care providers that PCR testing (not serology) is strongly recommended in diagnosing pertussis.

Laboratory Testing: Gather Specimens for PCR, Not Serology:

Commercially available serologic tests for pertussis have unproven or unknown clinical accuracy, with a reported sensitivity of 45-60% in most published studies. In contrast, molecular amplification tests offer high specificity and a sensitivity of 90-95%. To submit specimens for PCR, either at the Public Health Laboratory or at commercial labs, gather nasopharyngeal wash and swab specimens in saline within three weeks of onset of the characteristic cough. CDC does not recommend laboratory testing after three weeks of cough.

Clinical Case Definition:

The clinical case definition of pertussis is, in the absence of a more likely diagnosis, a cough illness lasting more than two weeks with at least one of the following: paroxysms of coughing; or inspiratory "whoop;" or post-tussive vomiting; or for infants less than one year of age only, apnea (with or without cyanosis).

To report suspect cases:

- Call 805-781-5500 (M-F, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.) or 805-781-4553 (weekends and after hours).
- Fax the completed [Confidential Morbidity Report \(CMR\) form](https://slocounty.ca.gov/CMR-Form-A) (slocounty.ca.gov/CMR-Form-A) to the Public Health Department at 805-781-5543.
- Submit the completed [Confidential Morbidity Report \(CMR\) form](https://slocounty.ca.gov/CMR-Form-A) (slocounty.ca.gov/CMR-Form-A) via [CalREDIE](https://www.calredie.org).

For more information about pertussis, see the California Department of Public Health Pertussis Quicksheet (bit.ly/CDPH-pertussis) or www.cdc.gov/pertussis.

Public Health Department

2191 Johnson Avenue | San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 | (P) 805-781-5500 | (F) 805-781-5543

www.slopublichealth.org