



BY EMAIL

June 7, 2024

To the students, parents, members of the staff and volunteers in elementary and secondary schools in the Montérégie

Re : Active transmission of whooping cough in elementary and secondary schools in the Montérégie

Dear Madam/Sir,

Over the past few months an increase in cases of whooping cough has been observed in the Montérégie area as well as throughout the Province of Quebec. We are writing to inform you that the transmission of this contagious disease may continue over the upcoming months.

Information about whooping cough:

- It is a respiratory infection caused by a bacteria which is transmitted through droplets projected in the air by a person with the infection, for example, when they cough or sneeze. It is easily transmitted between the members of a family or between children who attend the same day care service or school.
- It develops in several phases and lasts six to ten weeks. In the first days, it resembles a cold with a runny nose, a slight cough, a slight fever and eyes that water. Then the characteristic symptoms take over:
 - bouts of coughing (persistent and uncontrollable fits of coughing) OR:
 - a cough resembling a cock's crowing (noisy wheezing at the end of a bout of coughing)OR:
 - a cough ending with vomiting, retching or difficulty in catching your breath.

For a person who has had the appropriate vaccine against whooping cough, the symptoms may be lighter or atypical (e.g., no cock's crowing).

- The following individuals are considered as vulnerable to the disease since they are at greater risk of serious complications such as pneumonia, respiratory difficulties and even death;
 - children born by pregnant women at the end of their pregnancy;
 - babies born prematurely;
 - children under the age of 12 months who have not received the first three doses of the vaccine.
- Whooping cough can be treated using an antibiotic which can reduce the duration of the contagious period.

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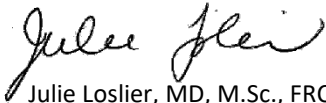
Actions that you can take to protect your health and that of others:

- A person who has a fever should remain at home;
- A person who coughs, has a sore throat or a stuffy nose should wear a mask and avoid contacts with people who are vulnerable to whooping cough;
- A person who has symptoms of whooping cough should consult a health professional or call info-santé 811;
- A person who has received a diagnosis of whooping cough will receive the following instructions:
 - To stay home from school or wear a mask, if applicable;
 - To avoid contacts with persons who are vulnerable to whooping cough.
- Maintain good habits for washing hands and coughing or sneezing in your elbow.
- Make sure that your vaccination is up to date. Vaccination is the best way to protect oneself from whooping cough. Even if, after time, the efficiency of the vaccine decreases, the disease will nevertheless be less serious.
 - You are encouraged to verify the doses received and receive any missing doses if needed;
 - To protect a baby about to be born. A dose of vaccine against whooping cough is recommended for all women who are pregnant (no matter what vaccines they have already received).

More information about whooping cough:

<https://www.quebec.ca/sante/problemes-de-sante/a-z/coqueluche>

Thank you for your cooperation in applying these instructions.



Julie Loslier, MD, M.Sc., FRCPC
Director of Public Health for the Montérégie

JL/mt