Whooping Cough Vaccine Required for Rising 7th Graders

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control is working to prevent the spread of pertussis, an illness that can be fatal to infants, by requiring older children to get vaccinated.

Rising seventh graders must be immunized for pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, with the Tdap vaccine. The shot’s name is short for tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis. Many children receive the Tdap vaccines during infancy. The vaccines are designed to jointly boost immunity.

The centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommend that 11-year-olds receive the Tdap vaccine. Students must present a certificate of immunization to schools obtained from county health departments or from their doctor’s office.

Whooping cough is especially contagious and symptoms include severe coughing that sounds like a high-pitched breathless gasp. Teens and adults who catch pertussis can rupture blood vessels and get cracked lips. Infants can die.

Dillon School District Four school officials and health professionals urge parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccination appointments should be made with the local health department or with a family physician.

Once a student has had their vaccination, an updated South Carolina Immunization Record should be taken to the child’s school. District nurses will maintain records denoting which students have had the vaccine and which students need the required vaccine.

At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, students will be excluded from school if they have not had the vaccination. The only exception is for those with a religious exemption. Religious exemptions can only issued by the local health department. If parents have questions about the vaccine, they should call and ask to speak to the nurse at their child’s school.

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