



# Dutchess County Department of Health Public Health Advisory\*

Subscribe to Public Health Updates at: <http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Health/16586.htm>

Michael C. Caldwell, MD, MPH  
Commissioner of Health



William R. Steinhaus  
County Executive

## **CORRECTED: Respiratory Illness in school-aged children**

Date: December 6, 2011 - 2:30 pm

*Please Distribute to: Healthcare Providers, Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, Primary Care, Infectious Diseases, Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Laboratory Medicine, Pulmonary Medicine, Critical Care, and Infection Control, and Schools (Please distribute to School Nurses).*

### **SUMMARY:**

- Several cases of **bacterial pneumonia** and **pertussis** have been found in local schools with several children hospitalized.
- **Pneumonia** and **pertussis** should be considered when evaluating school-aged children with respiratory symptoms.
- Providers should use PCR or culture to confirm a diagnosis as soon as possible and should not wait for laboratory confirmation to begin treatment.
- Suspect or confirmed cases of either disease including pneumonia clusters identified in school-aged children or day care centers, should be reported to the Dutchess County Department of Health's Communicable Disease Division at **845-486-3402** (M-F, 9-5) or after-hours at 845-431-6465.

**Mycoplasma Pneumoniae** is a highly contagious organism. The spectrum of symptoms range from mild cough to pneumonias that may require hospitalization. It is estimated that 5-10% of persons infected will develop pneumonia. Incubation period ranges from 1-4 weeks.

Erythromycins are the recommended course of treatment. Recurrences of disease are common. Pneumonia presentations may be atypical and require chest X-ray for diagnosis.

**Pertussis**, also known as whooping cough, is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. Since it is also highly contagious, early diagnosis and treatment of pertussis is critical. **Household members and close contacts of persons with suspected pertussis should receive prophylaxis.** Please encourage the use of TDap vaccine.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend Zithromax for 5 days as the preferred treatment for pertussis. Even those properly vaccinated with five (5) recommended doses may still be susceptible and require prophylaxis if exposed. Additional information regarding pertussis may be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/signs-symptoms.html>

\***Health Alert**- conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention; **Health Advisory**- provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action; **Health Update**- provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Dutchess County Department of Health**

387 Main Street, Poughkeepsie NY 12601 • (845) 486-3400 • Fax (845) 486-3447 • TTY (845) 486-3417