



COUNTY OF MONTEREY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Health Advisory

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Pertussis is on the Rise in Monterey County

Since January 1, 2026, the County of Monterey Health Department has received 43 reports of pertussis infections among Monterey County residents, in comparison to 11 reported infections during the same timeframe in 2025. The 43 pertussis infections reported during the first five months of 2026 exceed the 36 infections reported during the entire twelve months of 2025. Age of individuals reported to date in 2026 range from 3 months to 78 years, with nearly half of cases being between the ages of 5 and 17 years. The County of Monterey Health Department requests your assistance in preventing the spread of illness to vulnerable populations.

Recommendations:

1. Prevent new infections by encouraging vaccination.

- **Follow American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) recommendations** for immunization to protect against pertussis.
 - Vaccinate households with infants. Parents, household members age 11 years of age and older, and other caregivers should receive a single dose of Tdap.
 - Vaccinate and educate pregnant women. Immunize all women, irrespective of their immunization history, with Tdap during **every pregnancy** between 27-36 weeks' gestation to optimize antibody transfer and protection of infants at birth

2. Limit the spread of disease by identifying and treating pertussis cases and their contacts early.

- **Suspect pertussis** in individuals with a progressive cough of greater than one week duration, especially if post-tussive vomiting and/or paroxysmal coughing occurs.
 - Infants may have atypical presentation with mild symptoms initially.
 - Consider pertussis even in recently vaccinated people when evaluating patients with symptoms compatible with pertussis.
- **Test for pertussis.** Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing of specimens collected from the posterior nasopharynx is the most sensitive method.

Health Alert: Warrants immediate action or attention. **Health Advisory:** Provides 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.

- In young infants (≤ 3 month old), leukocytosis with lymphocytosis (white blood cell count of $\geq 20,000$ cells/mm³ with $\geq 50\%$ lymphocytes) and a cough illness is a strong indication of *B. pertussis* infection.
- **Report suspected cases** promptly to the Health Department (call 831-755-4521 or fax Confidential Morbidity Report forms to 831-775-8076). Timely reporting supports prevention and control measures.
- **Start treatment** immediately if pertussis is suspected; do not wait for laboratory confirmation.
- **Provide postexposure prophylaxis (PEP)** to asymptomatic contacts.
 - a. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) supports providing PEP to household contacts, people at high risk of developing severe pertussis infection, and those who will have contact with people at high risk for developing severe pertussis infection.

Additional Resources:

- County of Monterey Health Department Pertussis Website: <https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/government/departments-a-h/health/diseases/pertussis-whooping-cough>
- CDC Recommended Antimicrobial Agents for the Treatment and Postexposure Prophylaxis of Pertussis: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5414a1.htm>
- CDPH Pertussis Quicksheet: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Immunization/PertussisQuicksheet.pdf>
- AAP Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule for Ages 18 Years or Younger, United States, 2026: <https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/AAP-Immunization-Schedule.pdf>
- AAFP Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule for Ages 19 Years or Older, United States, 2026: <https://www.aafp.org/family-physician/patient-care/prevention-wellness/immunizations-vaccines/immunization-schedules.html>

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