

November 10, 2017

Dear Bard Community:

The Bard College community has 2 confirmed cases of pertussis (whooping cough) and 3 more cases diagnosed by symptoms. Bard Health Service is working closely with the Dutchess County Health Department to keep this outbreak contained and to identify and treat contacts to minimize further outbreaks.

Pertussis is an infection that affects the airways, and it can easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Pertussis can cause a severe cough that lasts for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits and/or vomiting; the coughing in pertussis is characterized by a high-pitched “whoop” noise. It is sometimes called “the hundred-day cough”. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be very dangerous for babies and people with weakened immune systems.

Recommendations:

1. If you have a bad cough:
 - Make an appointment with your primary provider as soon as possible and tell them that you may have been exposed to pertussis.
 - Students with bad coughs or known exposures should get checked by Health Service or at urgent care or Northern Dutchess ER on the weekend.
2. Health Service is giving prophylactic (preventative) medication to students who have been in close contact with those who have been diagnosed.
3. If you have been diagnosed with pertussis by someone outside Bard Health Service:
 - Please call 845-758-7433 to report your pertussis diagnosis.
 - After a pertussis diagnosis, it is important to stay isolated from others until you have been treated with antibiotics for 5 days.

Please make sure your vaccinations are up-to-date. Protection against pertussis from the childhood vaccine DTaP decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, should get a pertussis booster shot called “Tdap” to help protect themselves and babies near or around them. If you need Tdap, please check Bard Health Service website for local vaccine providers. Students can arrange vaccination.

Visit Bard Health service website <http://www.bard.edu/healthservices/> for more information about pertussis. The CDC also updates information about pertussis regularly:
<https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/outbreaks/about.html>

If you have questions or concerns, please call 845-758-7433 or utilize Bard Health Service website for information and updates. Thank you for doing your part to keep our community healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

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