

Date: 28 July 2023

Notice to Congregation and staff of St. Albert the Great Parish
10 Prestwick Dr SE Calgary, Alberta T2Z 2J6

Alberta Health Services (AHS) has been made aware of **1 case** of pertussis that was in attendance at **St. Albert the Great Parish** while infectious. In order to prevent spread of disease to others and to protect yourself and your family, please review the following:

Background:

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough or the “100-day cough,” is a disease caused by bacteria that infects the lungs and airways. Pertussis causes serious coughing fits that can lead to choking or vomiting. The coughing can be so intense that a ‘whooping’ sound often happens when an infected person tries to catch his or her breath.

Pertussis is spread easily when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Children can also be infected by rubbing their eyes or mouth after they touch toys or objects handled by a person infected with pertussis. The pertussis-causing bacteria can live for two to five days on dry objects like clothes, glass or paper.

Pertussis can also cause pneumonia, and in rare cases, seizures, brain injury and death. In Canada, one to four deaths are related to pertussis each year. These deaths are most often in infants who are too young to be immunized or children who are not fully immunized. Pertussis can be treated with antibiotics. Sadly, even with treatment, pertussis can be deadly.

Prevention:

Public health recommends that all childrens’ and adults’ immunizations are kept up to date. Currently in Alberta vaccination for pertussis is offered at two, four, six, and 18 months and a booster at four years and 14 years. Adults are recommended to receive a dose of Pertussis vaccine (dTaP) booster every 10 years. Pregnant individuals are also encouraged to get a dTap vaccine between 27 and 32 weeks gestation with each pregnancy, to provide protection to the baby for the first few months of life.

Action:

Please observe your **family/child** for symptoms that may include a mild fever, runny nose, red watery eyes and a cough, followed by more serious coughing fits that can last for weeks or months. The coughing fits may cause difficulty breathing, choking and vomiting.

If you or your child feel sick:

If you or a family member/your child develops the above symptoms, you should be assessed by a health care provider. Please notify them first to advise of possible pertussis and take this letter with you. Testing for pertussis is done by collection of a nasal swab that detects the bordetella pertussis bacteria. Ways to limit the spread include staying home when sick, covering your mouth when you cough and

early assessment and treatment by a health care provider. Anyone who has had respiratory symptoms in the previous 10 days should also wear a mask when indoors with other people

If you or your child do not feel sick:

If you or a family member/your child does not have any of the symptoms mentioned above, there is no need to see a nurse or physician for diagnosis. If you have any questions, please call Health Link at 811.

To reduce the risk to all Albertans, we need to ensure as many people as possible are up to date with their immunizations.

Please be sure that you and your children are up to date on all recommended immunizations, including those that protect against pertussis. Please contact call Health Link 811 to book immunization appointments.

For more information about pertussis and the pertussis vaccine, please visit <https://myhealth.alberta.ca>.

Thank you for your attention to this important health issue.
Sincerely,

Mercy Robertson RNB
Communicable Disease Control Nurse *on behalf of*

Dr. Richelle Schindler
Medical Officer of Health, Calgary Zone
Alberta Health Services