



HEALTH WATCH BULLETIN

PERTUSSIS

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Yukoners encouraged to get vaccinated against pertussis

WHITEHORSE – Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Brendan Hanley is encouraging Yukoners to update their pertussis, or whooping cough, vaccination if they plan on travelling this year.

The call is being issued in response to recommendations from the Public Health Agency of Canada and significant outbreaks of pertussis in California and Idaho.

“The Public Health Agency of Canada has suggested that all provinces and territories encourage up-to-date immunization for pertussis, particularly for those travelling to affected states,” Hanley said. “As we have seen before, it doesn’t take much for these infections to spread quickly.”

In California, 1,337 cases of pertussis were reported in the first six months of 2010, a five-fold increase from the same period last year when 258 cases were recorded. In Idaho, a total of 77 cases of pertussis were reported in the first six months, compared to 45 cases reported during the same period last year.

“This represents a significant increase in the disease’s activity level and we want to ensure all Yukon residents are protected, especially if they are travelling to an area that is already affected,” Hanley added.

Most infants already receive vaccinations for pertussis. However, it is a relatively new procedure for adults and is given with the tetanus vaccine. “It can be a very serious condition for both infants and adults,” Hanley added. “Immunization is the best way to protect against it.”

Anyone wishing to be immunized should contact Whitehorse Health Centre at 667-8864 or their local community health centre or visit http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/immunization_info.php.

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