

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Pertussis Protection Provided by *Tdap* Booster *Special Immunization Clinic Scheduled*

Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial disease spread from person to person through droplets from sneezes and coughs. It can cause severe and prolonged coughing spells often characterized by a loud “whoop” sound when the patient tries to take a breath. *Pertussis* can result in shortness of breath, disturbed sleep, vomiting, weight loss and even rib fractures, and can further lead to complications like pneumonia and death. Since there is no maternally-driven immunity, *pertussis* is particularly dangerous for newborns and infants who do not develop full immunity until they receive a series of DTaP immunizations beginning at two months and completed at four to six years of age. That is why the *Tdap* vaccine, a component of which provides protection from *pertussis*, is recommended for women in their late second trimester or early third trimester of pregnancy.

Despite widespread immunization in the U.S., the *pertussis* bacteria continues to circulate among the population, and in 2012 caused the greatest *pertussis* outbreak in the past fifty years.

“The greatest number of pertussis-related deaths occurs among young infants and about half the reported cases of the disease occur in adolescents. It is estimated that 80% of infant cases of pertussis is spread by a family member who has had close contact with the infant,” said Jesse Orton, Public Health Educator for the Oneida County Health Department.

Most every child has received the series of DTaP vaccines by age six, but it is felt that immunity can diminish over time. Therefore, **New York State Health Law requires all children entering the sixth grade, (usually age 11), receive a *Tdap* booster** to insure immunity from *pertussis*.

The Oneida County Health Department will hold a special *Tdap* immunization clinic on Friday, September 26th from 4-6 pm at the clinic located at 406 Elizabeth Street in Utica.

For more information on *Tdap* and other vaccinations contact the Oneida County Health Department at 798-5748 or visit our website at www.ocgov.net/oneida/health.