

Whooping cough cases double in El Dorado County

Ten cases of pertussis, or whooping cough, have been reported in El Dorado County this year. That is more than twice the number reported last year.

Six cases were reported in South Lake Tahoe and four cases were reported on the West Slope. No deaths have been reported in El Dorado County.

As of June 10, 3,458 cases of pertussis have been identified statewide this year, including the death of an infant.

Pertussis disease is cyclical and typically peaks every three to five years. The last peak in occurred in 2010, when El Dorado County had 54 cases and California had more than 9,400 cases. There were 10 pertussis related deaths across California in 2010, all among infants. There were no pertussis related fatalities in El Dorado County that year.

Pertussis is a contagious respiratory tract infection, spread through coughs and sneezes. Symptoms typically start with a cough and runny nose for one to two weeks, followed by weeks to months of rapid coughing fits that sometimes end with a whooping sound.

To prevent the spread of pertussis, it is recommended that:

- Pregnant women receive the pertussis vaccine booster during the third trimester of each pregnancy, even if they received it before. Immunity passes to the baby, providing some protection after birth and before the child can be vaccinated.
- Infants get vaccinated against pertussis as soon as possible. The first dose is routinely recommended at two months of age, but since pertussis is circulating in the

community, infants can be vaccinated as young as 6 weeks of age.

- Adults receive the pertussis vaccine booster, especially if they have contact with infants or are healthcare workers in contact with infants or pregnant women.