

# Health Matters

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## Whooping Cough on the Rise

By Mary Anderson, R.N., B.S.N., Public Health Nurse/Communicable Disease

As you may have heard from media reports in recent weeks, pertussis (whooping cough) is present in the Illinois. Symptoms of pertussis usually appear 5-10-days after exposure, but can take as long as 21 days. The first symptoms are similar to those of a common cold: a runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever and a mild, occasional cough. The cough gradually becomes severe and, after one to two weeks, the patient has spasmodic bursts of numerous, rapid coughs. The characteristic high-pitched "whoop," which is more common in children, comes from breathing in after a coughing episode. During such an attack, the patient may turn blue, vomit and become exhausted. Between coughing attacks, the patient usually appears normal.

Coughing attacks occur more frequently at night. The attacks increase in frequency for a couple of weeks, remain at the same level for 2-3 weeks, and then gradually decrease.

Coughing may last as long as 100 days. Cough medicines usually do not help eliminate this cough. Recovery is gradual, but coughing episodes can recur for months after the onset of pertussis.

Although most people recover from pertussis it can be severe for infants less than one year, especially premature infants with lung disease.

You can protect yourself and those around you from the disease by getting a Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) shot. The shots are available at the Health Department for those who are 10 to 64 years of age.

Source: Illinois Department of Public Health

## Coming Soon: Dental Clinic for Children

By Mark Hilliard, MPH, CHES, Public Health Administrator



The department is moving closer to opening a dental clinic which initially will be available to Medicaid-qualifying children under the age of 18 and pregnant women. Adult dental services are to be added at a later date. Because poor oral health can lead to chronic disease, such as heart disease and some cancers and the pain can contribute to missed school and work, the health department has made the expansion of dental services a priority.

The start-up costs of the dental clinic are being funded through grants from the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. Remodeling is near completion, equipment has been ordered, and the department is currently interviewing dental health professionals to staff the clinic.

The dental clinic was originally not scheduled to be ready for opening until June. However, pending hiring a dentist and all staff training being completed, it is anticipated that an earlier date may be possible.

Please visit our website at [www.lcdph.org](http://www.lcdph.org) or call the department at 217-735-2317 for more information.

**(Free)**

### 2011 Central IL MRC Conference

Are you interested in learning how you can make a difference in your community during a public health emergency? If so, join the Logan County Medical Reserve Corps and attend the 4th Annual Central IL MRC Conference for **FREE** on April 9th! Hands on training will be provided by the Illinois Medical Emergency Response Team. For more information, contact Shana Bean, Volunteer Coordinator, at 217-735-2317 or [sbean@lcdph.org](mailto:sbean@lcdph.org).



## Are Elevated Nitrate Levels in Your Well Water?

By: *Don Cavi, M.S., LEPH, Director of Environmental Health*



Logan County Department of Public Health Division of Environmental Health will again be offering free nitrate screenings for drinking water at the annual Lincoln community health fair located at the Lincoln Park District Sports Center on Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> from 9am to 2pm. Since public water supplies are monitored and regulated by the EPA, only water from private wells will qualify for screening.

Nitrate is a compound (oxygen and nitrogen) that can be found in drinking water and at elevated levels can pose a health risk to infants of less than 6 months of age. In addition, nursing women should not consume water with elevated nitrate levels. Sources of nitrate in drinking water can include, but are not limited to, farm-land fertilizer runoff, wastewater and animal feedlots.

To qualify for screening, simply bring in a 3oz. sample of your water. The screening will indicate if your water is above or below the nitrate action level. If your water screening indicates nitrates are above the action level, a water test kit will be provided to you at no cost. For more information, contact the Logan County Department of Public Health at 735-2317.



### 2011 Logan County Community Health Fair "Planting the Seeds of Wellness"

*Free Admission!*

Sponsored by:

*Lincoln Park District and Logan County Department of Public Health*

#### Featuring:

- ⇒ Health Screenings
- ⇒ Health and Safety Information
- ⇒ Well water testing (Nitrates)

**Saturday, April 2**

**9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**

**Lincoln Park District**

#### Featuring:

- ⇒ Entertainment
- ⇒ Free giveaways
- ⇒ Door prizes

**Recycling will be available once again at the Community Health Fair!**

**Watch the media for items to recycle including:**

**medications, eyeglasses, cell phones, etc.**

**cell phones, etc.**



## Vaccines for Children



Since 1994, parents have been protecting their children through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. This program provides free vaccines to children whose parents need help paying for them. Your child is eligible if it is before his or her 19th birthday, and if he or she is one of the following:

- ⇒ Medicaid-eligible
- ⇒ Uninsured/underinsured
- ⇒ American Indian or Alaska Native

Underinsured means your child has health insurance, (but it won't cover the vaccines) because:

- ⇒ It doesn't cover any vaccines
- ⇒ It doesn't cover certain vaccines
- ⇒ It covers vaccines, but it has a fixed dollar limit or cap for vaccines. Once that fixed dollar amount has been reached, your child is eligible.

So if your insurance covers vaccinations, you must get them through your doctor. The Health Department is an approved provider for those who are eligible for the VFC program. All vaccines are free through the VFC program, but there are fees associated with the service. Check with your doctor or call the Health Department at 217-735-2317 for more information.



## *Child Safety: 5 Household Poisons You Need to Know*

*By: Colleen Feece, M.A., Health Educator*

**Y**oung children are naturally curious about their surroundings, and at times might wind up touching and putting things into their mouths. Kids this age are small, so it can take very little to be harmful to their bodies. The Illinois Poison Center (IPC), recommends keeping all potentially harmful substances away from children, but the following substances might surprise you as potentially dangerous.

**1. Nicotine:** Remember some tobacco products can have smells like mint or cherry. Also be aware of anyone who uses spit tobacco and

spits into an empty can or cup that might be attractive to a young child. There are also cessation products like nicotine gum or lozenges that can be toxic to children.

**2. Lamp Oil:** this is often sweet smelling or colorful and therefore attractive to youngsters. The biggest problem with ingesting lamp oil is when it's swallowed it goes into the wrong pipe, and into the lungs. This can block oxygen transfer to the blood.

**3. Table Salt and Baking Soda:** Salt is sodium chloride which are both electrolytes that help our bodies function, however, too much can be harmful.

**4. Muscle Rubs like Bengay®:**

The active ingredient in many of these products is very similar to aspirin. Although it's not likely a child would ingest enough of this product, to cause serious harm, it is still best to keep it out of reach.

**5. Mouthwash:** Most mouthwashes contain ethanol, which is alcohol. Other items that might contain ethanol include body splash, perfume, aftershave, and hand sanitizer. Always make sure these products and all potentially harmful products are kept out of sight and reach of little ones. In case of accidentally ingestion please contact the IPC at 1-800-222-1222, or call 9-1-1.



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



**1-866-QUIT-YES**

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**Check us out at:**  
**[www.lcdph.org](http://www.lcdph.org)**

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### Did you know?

Logan County Department of Public Health  
offers these services:



#### CHRONIC HEALTH

- Screening and monitoring of high blood pressure, anemia, and diabetes
- Foot care clinics

#### COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

- Follow-up to prevent spread of contagious diseases.
- Testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.
- HIV testing and counseling by appointment
- Flu, pneumonia and foreign travel immunizations

#### MATERNAL HEALTH

- Breastfeeding education
- Genetic screening
- Free pregnancy testing
- High risk infant follow-up
- SIDS follow-up

#### CHILD HEALTH

- Blood lead level testing
- Childhood immunizations
- Vision/hearing screenings
- Communicable disease surveillance in schools

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