



Division of Public Health Services

*Office of the Assistant Director
Public Health Preparedness Services*

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JANICE K. BREWER, GOVERNOR
WILL HUMBLE, INTERIM DIRECTOR

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Dear Obstetrical Health Care Provider:

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) has received reports of several culture confirmed cases of pertussis in infants. We recommend that obstetricians encourage the pertussis vaccination of infant's family members, since data show that infants are most likely to contract pertussis from their mothers and other close family members¹. Infants are at highest risk for pertussis-related complications and hospitalizations, and those less than 6 months of age have the greatest risk of dying.

The Tetanus, Diphtheria, and acellular Pertussis vaccine (Tdap) has been recently licensed for adults. This vaccine is critical to prevent the spread of pertussis from adults to children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that adults who anticipate having close contact with an infant receive a single dose of Tdap. Ideally, Tdap should be administered at least 2 weeks prior to close contact with the infant. Because Tdap is not routinely recommended during pregnancy, a dose of Tdap should be administered in the immediate postpartum period if it has been 2 or more years since the last tetanus shot.²

In accordance with CDC guidelines regarding the administration of Tdap, ADHS recommends:

- 1 Vaccinating postpartum women before leaving the hospital or birthing center;
- 2 Encouraging fathers, other family members, and close contacts of infants to receive Tdap, and;
- 3 Considering Tdap vaccination in women of childbearing age during preconception wellness visits.

Uninsured adults can check into affordable, low cost vaccinations at an area community health center (sites listed at www.aachc.org) or contact the county health department (some county health departments carry adult vaccines).

Any children in the household (i.e.: siblings) who are 18 years of age or younger, are able to receive low cost or no cost vaccination from their pediatrician and/or primary care physician enrolled in the Arizona Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. If you have any questions, or need any further information or resources, please contact the Arizona Immunization Program Office (AIPO) at 602-364-3630.

Sincerely,

Cara Christ, M.D., M.S.
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Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Control

Karen Lewis, M.D.
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¹ Bisgard, K. et al. *Ped Infect Dis J.* 2004;23:985-989

² *Prevention of Pertussis, Tetanus, and Diphtheria among pregnant and postpartum women and their infants. MMWR. May 30, 2008*