

Whooping cough case confirmed at Brighton High School

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Officials at Brighton High School announced a confirmed case of pertussis. Parents were notified by email Friday afternoon that a ninth-grade student had contracted the disease.

Also known as whooping cough, pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial disease.

Dr. Michael Mendoza, the Monroe County commissioner of Public Health, said that any students who have a persistent cough or develop one in the next three weeks should seek medical attention.

Adults can also contract pertussis, and Dr. Mendoza advised parents or staff to contact their doctor if they develop cough symptoms.

“While pertussis most frequently occurs in unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children, it also occurs in school-age children and adults who have had the recommended pertussis immunizations,” Mendoza wrote in the letter to parents.

Initial symptoms of pertussis are similar to a common cold: runny nose, fever, and a mild cough. But for pertussis sufferers, this is followed by weeks of coughing fits. The

coughing can be so intense that it causes patients to gasp or emit a high-pitched whooping sound as they breathe in.

It is an airborne disease that spreads easily through the coughs and sneezes of an infected person.

People are infectious from the start of symptoms until about three weeks into the coughing fits. Patients are typically treated with antibiotics.

Mendoza advised that parents check with their physicians to make sure their children are up-to-date with their pertussis immunization.

Adults can also benefit from a pertussis booster called Tdap, he said.

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