Communicable Diseases Quarterly Report
Quarter 4: October 1 - December 31, 2018

Department of Public Health

Spotlight: Pertussis

Pertussis or whooping cough is a very contagious respiratory illness caused by the bacteria Bordetella pertussis. Ill people spread Pertussis by coughing and sneezing while in close contact with others. Early symptoms of infection last 1 - 2 weeks and can include: runny nose, low fever, mild coughing and apnea (cessation of breathing) in babies. Late stage symptoms appear after 1 - 2 weeks and can be more severe. Common late stage symptoms include: fits of rapid coughing followed by a high-pitched whooping sound, vomiting and exhaustion. In Fresno County, the number of pertussis cases vary by year and tend to peak every few years. The last peak year in Fresno County occurred in 2014 when 392 cases were reported to public health. During 2018, 91 cases were reported to public health. Pertussis is primarily a childhood disease and 91% of cases reported in Fresno County from 2012 - 2018 are in those age 18 or younger. Pertussis is most severe in babies and around half of babies one year old and younger who get pertussis will require hospitalization. The most effective way to reduce pertussis transmission and complications is by being vaccinated. Mothers in their third trimester should receive a pertussis vaccine before their babies arrival. After birth, children should receive 5 scheduled doses of the pertussis vaccine by age 6, and a final pertussis vaccine around age 11-12. It is recommended that adults repeat the pertussis vaccine every ten years. The Fresno County Public Health Department provides immunizations to the public and can be reached at: (559) 600-3550. 

Reportable Diseases in Fresno County:

A selection of Reportable Diseases appears in this Quarterly Report.

Reportable disease information is compiled by number of cases and includes confirmed, probable and suspect classifications.

The tables to the left, numbers of cases for each disease are listed for the current and previous year and corresponding quarter.

Helpful links for disease rates

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/datastatistics

California Department of Public Health (CDPH): https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/CDPHHome.aspx

Fresno County Department of Public Health: http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/public-health

Communicable disease – a disease which can be transmitted directly or indirectly by a living organism or by a non-living object or substance. Examples include: from an infected person to another person who is susceptible; from an object (sheets, clothing, telephone handset, drinking glass) that may harbor germs to a susceptible person.

Reportable disease – in compliance with federal and state health code, certain diseases must be reported when a confirmed or suspect diagnosis is made on a secured and standardized form. https://www.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/notifiable/2018/ for more information.

CD Quarterly Report Form Update: 3/7/2019; Data is provisional