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## Whooping cough outbreak infecting vaccinated children, health dept. hiring additional nurses

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Editor

MISSOULA - The Missoula City-County Health Department has confirmed 92 cases of pertussis, or whooping cough, as of 1 PM Friday.

Supervisor of the Infectious Disease Office Cindy Farr says of those 92 confirmed cases, the majority of the children infected had previously been vaccinated.

"We're still trying to investigate some of those cases," Farr said Friday. "I can tell you the majority of them have been vaccinated kids. We have at least some that have been unvaccinated, but the majority of them definitely have been vaccinated."

According to the Centers for Disease Control there are six parts to the whooping cough vaccination series. Five shots are done before a child turns six. When a they turn 11, an additional booster vaccine is needed.

Farr said the booster vaccine is only 70 percent effective the first year, and gets less effective as time goes on.

She adds people still need to get vaccinated, because it makes the symptoms of the disease less severe.

"The kids who are vaccinated that get pertussis it actually presents a lot more like they have a little cold or allergies and they get a minor cough. Then that cough may hang on for a couple months," Farr said. "In people who have not even vaccinated, then they get a much more severe from the disease. Babies will end up in the hospital from this."

Farr said 16 schools across Missoula County confirmed cases of the highly contagious disease.



Health officials believe 1,500 to 2,000 people may have been exposed.

To help manage the outbreak, the Missoula City-County Health Department is looking to hire 4-6 temporary nurses.

[For symptoms and additional information from the health department click here.](#)

