

NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ADVISORY

Pertussis Increase in Taos County

July 1, 2026

Background:

As of July 1, 2026, the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) has received reports of 39 cases of pertussis statewide. Of those, 14 have been reported from Taos County, with cough onsets ranging from mid-April to late June. Although several individuals share households, epidemiologic data suggest there have also been undiagnosed or unrecognized cases contributing to spread in the community. Clinicians are strongly encouraged to consider pertussis and order confirmatory PCR testing for individuals experiencing cough accompanied by paroxysmal coughing fits, a “whoop” sound on inspiration, or post-tussive vomiting, regardless of age or vaccination history. Infants can present atypically, with apnea, grunting, gagging, eye-bulging, vomiting, or cyanosis; they could also have minimal or no cough. Infants with pertussis can deteriorate rapidly.

Recommendations for Clinicians:

Confirmatory Testing:

Testing by **PCR is strongly recommended** within the first 3 to 4 weeks of cough onset. Acceptable specimens include nasopharyngeal swabs or aspirates. (Culture is also confirmatory, and best collected within 2 weeks of onset.) Results are most reliable when specimens are collected before antimicrobial treatment begins.

Commercial **serological testing is not recommended** for diagnosis, due to wide variability between tests and [unproven or unknown](#) clinical accuracy. Clinicians should **not** use *B. pertussis* antibody tests to diagnose patients with whooping cough.

If a patient is diagnosed with pertussis, but is no longer eligible for confirmatory testing, the diagnosis should still be immediately reported to the New Mexico Department of Health by calling 1-833-796-8773 or faxing a report to 505-827-0013.

Treatment and Isolation:

Pertussis is highly contagious. A person with suspected or confirmed pertussis should stay home until completing **five** days of an appropriate antimicrobial, or until 21 days have elapsed since cough onset, whichever is first. Hospitalized patients should be on droplet precautions during this time.

[Recommended antibiotics](#) include azithromycin, clarithromycin, erythromycin, or trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole.

Antibiotic post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is recommended for all household contacts and high-risk close contacts of a case, regardless of their immunization status.

Vaccination:

A Tdap booster is recommended during **each pregnancy**. [Tdap during pregnancy](#) prevents about 78% of cases and 90% of hospitalizations from pertussis in infants younger than 2 months old.

People of all ages should stay up to date on pertussis vaccination. Visit CDC's website for more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/index.html>.

Additional Resources:

For more information about pertussis, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/hcp/clinical-overview/index.html> or call the NMDOH Help Line at **1-833-SWNURSE** (1-833-796-8773).

New Mexico Health Alert Network: To register for the NM Health Alert Network, please visit the following site: <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjZ/10b2> . Please fill out the registration form completely and click Submit at the bottom of the page, to begin receiving important health alerts, advisories, and updates.

Please Note: that our system also utilizes text messaging to notify members of important health information. Due to FCC Regulation changes that are designed to decrease the amount of unwanted spam text messages sent each year to citizens, please save this phone number **(855) 596-1810** as the **"New Mexico Health Alert Network"** default phone number for your account used for text messages on the mobile device(s) you register with us.