**Sample letter: Letter to health care provider re: pertussis**

Date:

Dear Health Care Provider: Re: Pertussis Contact

This child may have been exposed to a case of pertussis in his/her child care setting/classroom and has been asked to see his/her health care provider if experiencing symptoms suggestive of pertussis. Recommended measures are outlined below.

1. **Cultures:** Nasopharyngeal cultures should be obtained from symptomatic contacts, preferably before initiating antibiotic therapy.
2. **Antibiotics:** Any of the following can be used for treatment of pertussis. All have the same efficacy. Newer macrolides tend to be better tolerated but are more expensive:
   * Azithromycin
   * Clarithromycin
   * Erythromycin
   * Trimethroprim-Sulfamethoxazole – for individuals ≥ 2 months who have contraindication to or cannot tolerate macrolide agents

Antibiotic dosing depends on the age of the patient. Please refer to your most recent guidelines for appropriate dosing.

Clients should no longer be considered infectious after 5 days of therapy.

Infants < 2 months of age who are receiving macrolide antibiotics should be monitored for symptoms and signs of pyloric stenosis.

A pediatric infectious disease consult should be considered for infants < 6 months of age because of the potential side effects.

1. **Immunization:** Immunizations following exposure will not provide protection from current infection nor eradicate the organism but it is important that, unless contraindicated, all children be up to date with scheduled pertussis vaccine even if they have had pertussis disease. Please review the immunization status of the child and provide vaccines as required.
2. **Exclusion:** Exclusion of cases and contacts has not been shown to be an effective strategy for pertussis control. However, it may be recommended by the Medical Officer of Health in specific high-risk situations.

Pertussis is a notifiable disease in Nova Scotia. Please report all suspect and confirmed cases to Public Health.

If you wish to discuss any of this information, please do not hesitate to call me at:

Sincerely,

# Public Health Nurse

Phone