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Whooping cough cases up this year: Public Health]

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health is alerting the public to the presence of pertussis (whooping cough) in the region. Twelve cases have been reported over the fall and winter, which is higher than normal for the region.

It's possible that many individuals are behind in their vaccinations because they were unable to get them due to COVID-19, so now is the time to get fully vaccinated, according to Public Health.

?Pertussis is serious ? especially for our children,? said Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO. ?While we have only seen a few cases so far, it is particularly dangerous for children under one year of age and those who are not fully vaccinated. Infection in these individuals can result in hospitalization or death.?

Vaccination is the best way to prevent pertussis. The pertussis vaccine is part of Ontario's public vaccination program. Pertussis vaccines are available at either Public Health or your doctor's office.

Pertussis is a bacterial infection that spreads easily through droplets that are sprayed into the air when someone sick with pertussis sneezes, coughs or talks. It can also spread by direct contact with objects used by someone sick with pertussis. As always, practice handwashing, good cough and sneeze etiquette and stay home if you are sick.

Early symptoms of pertussis resemble a cold with a runny nose and a cough. The cough becomes more frequent and severe. A child may gag, vomit, have trouble breathing or give a loud ?whoop? sound when breathing in (not all infected persons make this sound). If these symptoms develop, contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible.