



News Release
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SLVHD Urges Pertussis Vaccine for New Moms

New study shows half of babies with whooping cough get the illness from their parents

(Salt Lake County) – A new study published in yesterday’s *Obstetrics & Gynecology Journal* has officials at the Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) urging new mothers to protect their newborns by getting vaccinated themselves against pertussis. Health officials say new parents, especially mothers, should receive the Tdap* vaccine before taking their babies home from the hospital.

The study goes on to explain that an additional 25% to 35% of infant pertussis cases get the disease from another household member.

Pertussis (also known as whooping cough) is a highly contagious disease marked by severe coughing. Parents may not even realize they have pertussis, which to them may just seem like a bad cough. But while adult patients usually recover, the illness can easily spread to not-yet-vaccinated newborns – and pertussis can be deadly to infants.

During 2007 and 2008, twenty-five percent of pertussis cases in infants and children less than two years of age were hospitalized compared to only 8% of the adult cases.

Even if parents were vaccinated as children they can get and spread the disease because the vaccine's immunity wears off after about six to eight years.

“If a new mother has not received a Tdap booster since childhood, I can’t stress strongly enough that she needs to get vaccinated as soon after giving birth as possible,” says Audrey Stevenson, family health services director with the SLVHD. “It will help keep her and her newborn healthy.”

New mothers (and others) can receive the Tdap vaccine from their private healthcare provider or at one of the SLVHD Public Health Clinics listed.

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**Tdap is a relatively new vaccine recommended for people 11-64 years of age. It provides a booster dose to protect teens and adults against three diseases, including pertussis.*



Salt Lake Valley Health Department Public Health Clinics

South East Public Health Center
9340 South 700 East
Sandy, UT 84070
255-7114

South Main Public Health Center
3690 South Main Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84115
468- 3690

Salt Lake City Public Health Center
610 south 200 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
534-4666

Ellis Shipp Clinic
4535 South 5600 West
West Valley City, UT 84120
963-7335