



SAN MATEO COUNTY
HEALTH SYSTEM

August 24, 2010

Dear OB Provider,

California is currently experiencing an epidemic of pertussis. As an OB provider, you can take the following actions for your patients: THINK, TEST, TREAT and VACCINATE.

THINK: Please consider the diagnosis of pertussis in your patients presenting with a persistent cough.

TEST: Obtain a nasal aspirate (preferred specimen) or a nasopharyngeal swab for PCR and/or culture. Serological tests are NOT recommended.

TREAT: Pregnant women can receive antibiotic treatment for pertussis and it is crucial that they be treated before they deliver, as mothers can easily transmit pertussis to their newborn babies. While clarithromycin and bactrim are Category C agents, azithromycin and erythromycin are Category B agents, and can be used for the treatment of pertussis in pregnant women. Because of the potential gastro-intestinal side effects of erythromycin, **azithromycin is the preferred agent to treat pertussis during pregnancy.**

VACCINATE: A safe and effective vaccine **called Tdap** can protect your patients from this serious disease. Tdap is a tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis combination vaccine approved for use in adolescents and adults. Because immunity to pertussis wanes after vaccination and after natural infection, all adults should receive one dose of Tdap in place of their routine Td vaccine booster. **Pregnant women, new parents and household contacts of new babies are at increased risk for contracting and transmitting pertussis, and are particularly encouraged to make sure that they are up-to-date on their pertussis vaccination.**

Pregnant women can receive the Tdap vaccine during their 2nd, 3rd trimester or post partum.

For additional information about pertussis, visit www.smhealth.org/pertussis. Please call us at 650-573-2346 if you would like us to organize a presentation on pertussis in your practice.

Sincerely,

Scott Morrow, MD, MPH

COMMUNITY HEALTH • PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS

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