



YELLOWHAWK

TRIBAL HEALTH CENTER

+ Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center
46314 Timine Way
Pendleton, OR 97801

+ P 541.966.9830
+ yellowhawk.org

News Release: For Immediate Release

DATE: March 13, 2025

Contact: Shanna Hamilton, Public Relations Manager
541.240.8459 or shannahamilton@yellowhawk.org

Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center Public Health Department Informs Tribal Community of Pertussis Outbreak within the CTUIR; 2 Cases reported within CTUIR Reservation Boundaries and 19 Cases Reported Across Multiple Regions and Age Groups within Umatilla County.

MISSION – Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center Public Health Department is informing the Tribal community about an ongoing pertussis (whooping cough) outbreak within the CTUIR and in Umatilla County, with 21 reported cases, including both confirmed and additional suspect cases. These cases have been identified not only within the reservation boundaries but also across multiple regions of Umatilla County and span individuals of various age groups.

Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory disease that spreads easily through coughing and sneezing. While it can cause severe illness, especially in infants, young children, and those with weakened immune systems, many individuals in this situation experience only mild symptoms like those of the common cold. Because of this, pertussis can often go undiagnosed and unintentionally spread to others who may be more vulnerable.

What Parents and Community Members Need to Know:

- **Symptoms to watch for:** Mild cold-like symptoms (such as a runny nose and mild cough) in the early stages. This can develop into prolonged coughing fits, sometimes with a "whooping" sound, difficulty breathing, vomiting after coughing, and exhaustion.
- **Who's at risk?** Infants, pregnant women, unvaccinated individuals, and those with weakened immune systems face the highest risk of severe illness.
- **Prevention is key:** Yellowhawk Public Health urges everyone to check their vaccination status. Yellowhawk patients can contact Yellowhawk Public Health to review their vaccination status. Tribal employees and others can contact their Primary Care Provider or Umatilla County Public Health at 541.278.6290. The Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) vaccine is the most effective way to prevent pertussis.

What to do if you or your Child Have Symptoms:

If you or your child develops symptoms, contact your healthcare provider immediately. Those diagnosed with pertussis may need antibiotics and should stay home to prevent further spread.

"Yellowhawk wants to reassure the Tribal community that we are closely monitoring the pertussis situation, both within the CTUIR and in the surrounding areas. We are maintaining ongoing communication with Umatilla County Public Health to address the situation within our community. Our priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of the community, and we want you to feel confident that we are doing everything possible to minimize the risk of pertussis spreading throughout the CTUIR" said Michael Erickson, Public Health Assistant Director. "If you have questions regarding pertussis, Tdap vaccination, or how to stay safe, please do not hesitate to call and speak with one of our knowledgeable Public Health Nurses."

Yellowhawk Public Health will continue to monitor the outbreak, collaborate with Umatilla County Public Health, and provide updates to our community as needed.

For more information on how to receive a vaccination or to know more about pertussis symptoms, please contact the Yellowhawk Public Health Department at 541.240.8697. Please utilize appropriate resources when researching pertussis, here are some helpful links.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [Pertussis \(Whooping Cough\) | Whooping Cough | CDC](#)

[Oregon Health Authority Pertussis website](#)

Umatilla County Public Health Website: [Public Health - Umatilla County Public Health](#)



Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center is owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. It provides primary healthcare and additional services to more than 3,000 American Indian/Alaska Native patients.

Yellowhawk Vision: Our Tribal community achieves optimal health through a culture of wellness.

Yellowhawk Mission: It is our mission to empower our Tribal community with opportunities to learn and experience healthy lifestyle.