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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
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**To:** California prenatal care providers

**Date:** June 27, 2014

As a prenatal care provider, you play a critical role in a pregnant woman's decision to get vaccinated against pertussis and influenza to protect both her health and that of her newborn baby. To ensure the health of as many pregnant women and newborns as possible, please educate pregnant women about the importance of pertussis and influenza vaccination and provide immediate or easy access to these vaccines during pregnancy.

### **Pertussis is Widespread in California**

A pertussis epidemic has been declared in California in 2014. As of June 24, 4,558 pertussis cases have been reported to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), more than the number reported in all of 2013.<sup>1</sup> The disease is cyclical and peaks every 3 to 5 years. With the state's previous peak occurring in 2010, another epidemic year was not unexpected, but is no less concerning.

Infants too young to be fully immunized are most likely to be hospitalized or die from pertussis. Of the cases reported so far this year, 177 cases were infants <4 months of age; 89 (50%) of whom were hospitalized. Tragically, 3 infants, all too young to be vaccinated, have died from pertussis in 2014.<sup>1</sup>

### **Recommendation - Vaccinate Your Pregnant Patients**

**CDPH is urging prenatal care providers to immunize all pregnant women between 27 and 36 weeks gestation with Tdap during each pregnancy**, regardless of the number of prior doses of Tdap previously received, to maximize the transplacental transfer of pertussis antibodies and protection of the newborn infant.<sup>2</sup> Tdap immunization during pregnancy has not been associated with an increased risk of adverse events in vaccinated women or their infants.<sup>3</sup>

Immunization of pregnant women is disappointingly uncommon; a survey of women delivering in California hospitals in October 2013 indicated that only 20 – 25% received Tdap during pregnancy.<sup>4</sup> Increasing immunization of pregnant women with Tdap could protect more infants from pertussis.

Immunization of pregnant women with Tdap is covered without copayment by private and public insurers, including Medi-Cal. (See vaccine codes on supplemental page.) If you do not currently offer Tdap at your practice, please refer your patients to a site where they can easily obtain it, whether their primary care provider, local health department, or a pharmacy that offers Tdap.

**Your pregnant patients need your strong recommendation to receive Tdap**—You may be the only provider they see.

Sincerely,

Carol Glaser, MD  
Acting Chief, Immunization Branch

## Supplementary Information

### Support Our Efforts: Complete This Survey

As we prepare for a peak pertussis year, the California Department of Public Health would like to learn more about your role in recommending and administering immunizations. Please take just 5 minutes to complete this online survey by visiting:

<http://bit.do/OBSurvey>

### Educational Materials for Your Patients

To aid in your discussions about the importance of Tdap immunization during pregnancy, CDPH has the following materials available:

- [Expecting? Protect Your Baby from Whooping Cough](#) flyer | [Spanish](#)
- [Immunizations for a Healthy Pregnancy](#) brochure | [Spanish](#).

The flyer and brochure are available for download at [eziz.org](http://eziz.org). Order FREE copies from your local health department, as supplies allow. To find your local health department, visit [www.GetImmunizedCA.org](http://www.GetImmunizedCA.org) and click on the first link under “Resources”.

### CPT Codes for Tdap

Tdap Vaccine	Vaccine Administration	
	≤18 years of age	>18 years of age
90715	90460 - 90461	90471 - 90472

For more immunization and billing information from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), visit [www.immunizationforwomen.org/](http://www.immunizationforwomen.org/).

### References

1. California Department of Public Health. Pertussis Report, June 24, 2014. [http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Documents/Pertussis\\_Report\\_6-24-2014.pdf](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Documents/Pertussis_Report_6-24-2014.pdf)
2. Update on immunization and pregnancy: tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis vaccination. Committee Opinion No. 566. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2013;121:1411–4.
3. Munoz FM, Bond NH, Maccato M, et al. Safety and Immunogenicity of Tetanus Diphtheria and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap) Immunization During Pregnancy in Mothers and Infants: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA*. 2014;311(17):1760-1769. doi:10.1001/jama.2014.3633.
4. California Department of Public Health. Unpublished raw data.