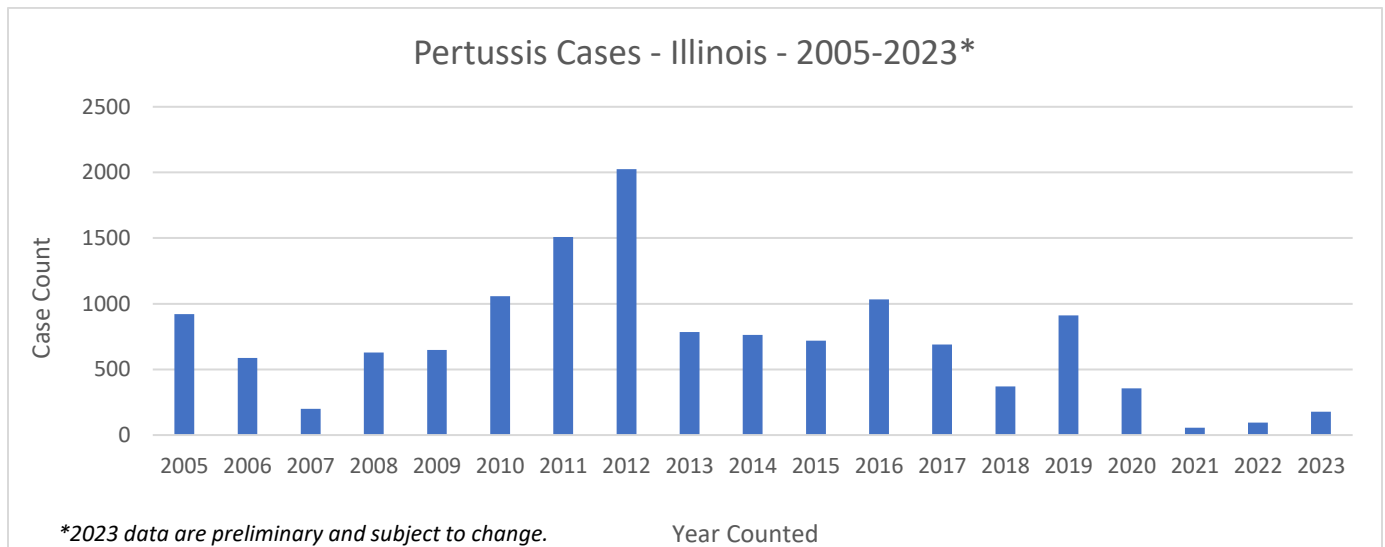


## Summary and Action Items

- Alert public health partners to a recently observed increase in pertussis cases.
- Remind local health departments and health care providers to be vigilant for post-pandemic increases in other vaccine-preventable diseases in addition to pertussis.
- Recommend, when pertussis is suspected, confirmatory testing with nasopharyngeal (N/P) swab for PCR and/or culture.
- Encourage providers to:
  - review all patient immunization records during healthcare visits and consider DTaP or Tdap booster, if indicated, and
  - identify and treat close contacts ([see guidance for specific recommendations](#)) with pertussis prophylaxis and confirm they are up to date on their pertussis immunization.
- Continue to counsel patients and administer pertussis vaccination as per the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices [recommendations](#).

## Background

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has observed a recent increase in pertussis cases as compared to reported pertussis cases in 2021 and 2022. Public health officials expect cases of pertussis and other vaccine-preventable diseases to continue to rise to pre-pandemic levels. In 2023, there have been 177 confirmed and probable cases of pertussis reported in Illinois to date (all case counts are preliminary and can change). Even though that number is lower than the total number of cases reported in most years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, cases do appear to be increasing, and we have noticed several months in 2023 with an increase in reports. This could also point to a potential spike in cases during the upcoming fall and winter respiratory season.



## Illinois Department of Public Health

## Diagnosis and Treatment:

Healthcare providers and local health departments should remain vigilant in monitoring for cases and [outbreaks](#), obtaining appropriate testing, and reporting pertussis and other vaccine-preventable diseases to their local health departments. The preferred method of testing to diagnose pertussis is RT-PCR by NP swab or a culture confirmation. Many commercial laboratories offer testing.

Recommended antimicrobial agents for [treatment](#) and [chemoprophylaxis](#) of pertussis include azithromycin, clarithromycin, and erythromycin. Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole can be used in persons two months of age and older. Duration of therapy is based on the antimicrobial used and age of the pertussis case.

Early treatment of pertussis is most effective, and preferably should begin before paroxysms of coughing occur. CDC recommends antimicrobial treatment of persons one year of age and older if within three weeks of cough onset. Infants and pregnant women should be treated if within 6 weeks of cough onset. Healthcare providers should consider treating prior to testing results if clinical history is suggestive of pertussis, or if the person is at increased risk of complications from pertussis or will have contact with persons at increased risk of pertussis complications.

## Prevention:

Vaccination is the most effective preventative measure against pertussis infection. Providers should make sure their patients are up to date on their immunizations including Tdap. Post-exposure antimicrobial prophylaxis (PEP) may be also considered for specific close contacts, see (<https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/pep.html>). Please contact your local health department for additional guidance on PEP.

To prevent further spread of disease in congregate settings, it is very important to recommend individuals with symptoms be excluded from work, school, or childcare while completing pertussis work-up and antibiotic treatment.

Encourage all patients to always:

- Cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash their hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based sanitizer often.
- Not share foods, drinks or anything that will go in the mouth.

## Additional Resources & References:

- [IDPH Communicable Disease Control and Immunization Code \(77 Ill. Adm. Code Part 690 Control of Communicable Diseases Code\)](#)
- [CDC VPD Manual – Pertussis Chapter](#)

**Target Audience:** Healthcare Providers, Emergency Departments, Local Health Departments

## Date Issued

October 3, 2023