

To the Editor-

In the past 5 years, data collected by the Department of Health indicates that Darien has experienced an uptick in the number of diagnosed “Whooping Cough” infections. There were two cases documented here in town just last week.

Pre-1940, there were approximately 200,000 cases diagnosed in the United States per year. However, with the advent of the pertussis vaccine that number dropped to approximately 1000 cases per year by 1970. Given the morbidity and mortality of “whooping cough”, the vaccine was a significant breakthrough.

However, in 2005, the Center for Disease Control shows that there were approximately 25,000 cases in the United States.

Why would that be?

There are several theories as to why. The primary concern is that the antibodies derived from the childhood vaccination disappear as patients mature into adulthood. If so, the solution to the problem is quite easy. Adults need boosters. Another variable is the drop in childhood vaccination rates, due to concerns regarding vaccines and a lack of awareness about the implications of the disease itself.

Per the CDC, it is recommended that adults receive one pertussis booster during their lifetime. This is particularly important for adults in families where there are babies and infants, who are particularly susceptible to the disease. They also recommend that children receive their vaccines via the DTAP series.

By receiving your booster shot, not only will you protect yourself, you protect those around you who might be more susceptible.

To update your pertussis vaccines, speak with your local physician.

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