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It's Back...

It's interesting how the entertainment industry has affected the way we live and learn. We have musical memories of special times and places, and of course, memories of those one hit wonders: Devo and "Whip It;" Frankie Goes to Hollywood with "Relax;" and Billy Ray Cyrus and his "Achy Breaky Heart." And who can forget the song that, amazing as it seems, made it as high as #2 on the Billboard charts in 1993... "Whoomp! There It Is!" Now, fast forward twenty-plus years and "Whoomp! There It Is" has become "Whoop! There It Is." That is "Whoop," as in Whooping Cough, also known as pertussis. Unfortunately, it hasn't gone away. Quite the contrary, there it is (again) and it continues to make a major comeback. Yes, whether you conjure up visions of "Chuckie" or "The Terminator," it's back.

We recently had a few kids admitted to the peds floor with pneumonia and later found out that they actually had pertussis as well! Noting that this was one of those classic "teaching opportunities," one of our pulmonary fellows gave us a quick 30-second in-service on the subject. The brief, but meaningful nuggets (or pearls, if you will allow the self-reference), brought back images of yet another entertainment memory as we immediately adapted them to the style of Jeff Foxworthy's, "You Might be a Redneck if..." presentation. In our minds, we heard, "It Might be Pertussis if..." and it certainly was worth sharing. So, here we go:

It ~~YOU~~ MIGHT BE *Pertussis* A-REDNECK IF ...

- 1) If a kid has a coughing fit that is often followed by a "whoop" sound, it might be pertussis! (That distinctive sound is generated as the air goes through an airway that is partially closed. Hence, the common name for the condition.)
- 2) If a kid is coughing so hard they turn blue, it might be pertussis!
- 3) If a kid is coughing so hard they barf, it might be pertussis!
- 4) If a kid has blanks in their immunization record (meaning they haven't had all of their childhood immunizations), it might be pertussis!
- 5) If a kid, especially a baby or little one, has an apneic spell after coughing, it might be pertussis!

The takeaway from all those memory-filled moments is this: Much like epiglottitis which is making a comeback, pertussis is mounting an even bigger comeback tour of the pediatric population - and that means big time exposure for the hospital and EMS population!

Whoop! There it is!

If your patient is coughing so hard and continuously they are blue or barfing... think about pertussis.

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