



Get Healthy Carson City

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This column appears in the Nevada Appeal Tuesday health pages. It addresses topics related to the health of our community.

Whooping Cough: A True Story

Jazzlyn's Story

Jamie and Oscar were excited to add a third child to their growing family. On Saturday, March 23, 2013, Jamie gave birth to a healthy baby girl they named Jazzlyn. "She was such a happy baby," recalls Jamie. "She loved playing peek-a-boo and I would often catch her with a smile on her face."

When Jazzlyn was about three weeks old, Jamie noticed that she had developed a slight cough. The pediatrician recommended using a humidifier and returning if she got worse. Several days later, Jazzlyn started having trouble breathing. "I heard a grunt and went to check on Jazzlyn. She was turning different shades of purple and not breathing," Jamie remembers. "It was such a relief when she started crying." Still concerned, Jamie decided to take Jazzlyn to the emergency room. While at the hospital, Jazzlyn stopped breathing again and the doctors had to revive her.

The next day, Jazzlyn was taken by helicopter to a hospital that could better handle her illness. There she received 7 medications and was hooked up to a ventilator (a machine to help her breathe). Her new doctor suspected that she had whooping cough. At first, Jazzlyn seemed to be doing better, but she took a turn for the worse. The doctors performed a procedure to help her breathe, but it only helped for a little while. The following day, Jamie and Oscar were told Jazzlyn needed immediate surgery. "Our hearts dropped," Jamie recalls. "We decided to baptize her that night while all of our family was there."

The next morning, Jamie and Oscar learned that there was nothing more the doctors could do. Jazzlyn's kidneys had shut down and her heart was beginning to as well. At 11 am on April 25, 2013, Jazzlyn passed away peacefully. "She was too sick and her body was too weak to fight this," Jamie explains.

Jazzlyn's final diagnosis was pneumonia caused by whooping cough. They still don't know how she got it.

"I want people to know how serious whooping cough can be and that it can be prevented," says Jamie, who hadn't heard of or been offered the whooping cough vaccine (also called Tdap) while she was pregnant. "Vaccines are really important and by getting this one, mothers can help protect their babies. If I get pregnant again, I would definitely get Tdap during my pregnancy to help protect my baby."

This personal story is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/pregnant/mom/real-story.html>

Although death from whooping cough is rare, most are among babies who are too young to be protected by their own vaccinations, which don't begin until they are 2 months old.

The best way to protect babies and children that are not fully vaccinated against whooping cough is by building the immunity of the people that surround them, such as child care staff, parents, and other children. This is known as "Community Immunity".

Due to the recent increases in whooping cough (pertussis) cases in Carson City, Douglas, and Lyon Counties, the Health Department strongly recommends all families (adults and children) to be properly vaccinated against the disease.



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For more information about pertussis immunizations and other Health Department services, please visit our website at GetHealthyCarsonCity.org or follow us at www.facebook.com/cchhs