**Immunizations: Essential to health at any age!**

**August is National Immunization Awareness Month**

The purpose of this observance is to highlight the importance of immunizations, one of the top 10 public health accomplishments of the 20th Century, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

In the United States, vaccines have greatly reduced infectious diseases that once routinely killed or harmed many infants, children, and adults. However, the viruses and bacteria that cause vaccine-preventable disease still exist and can be passed on to people who are not protected by vaccines. Every year, thousands of Americans still suffer serious health problems, are hospitalized, and even die from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines. Protect your health and the health of your family. Make sure you and your loved ones are up-to-date on recommended vaccines.

**Here’s why you shouldn’t wait:**

- Many vaccine-preventable diseases are still common in the U.S.
- Those that are not common here are still found in other parts of the world, and can still be a threat.
- Some of these diseases are very contagious.
- Any of these diseases could be serious – even for healthy people.
- Certain people may be at higher risk for getting some diseases or having more serious illness if they were to get sick, like young children, older adults, and those with health conditions.

**Measles in the U.S.**

Between January and June 2014, there were over 500 cases of measles reported in the U.S., more than in the last 20 years.

- Before the measles vaccination program started in 1963, about 3 to 4 million people in the U.S. got measles each year.
- Thanks to widespread vaccination, measles was declared to be eliminated from the U.S. in 2000.
- However, measles is still common in many other countries and is brought into the U.S. by unvaccinated travelers who get it while abroad.

*Measles is very contagious and can cause serious illness. The best way to protect yourself and loved ones from measles is by getting vaccinated.*
Whooping Cough Resurgence

Whooping cough (Pertussis) is a highly contagious respiratory disease that is often thought of as a disease of the past. While we no longer see the number of cases we did in the U.S. before whooping cough vaccines were available, it is a growing health concern.

 The U.S. experienced a nearly 60-year record high number of cases in 2012, with more than 48,000 reported cases and 20 deaths.
 Most of the deaths reported in 2012 were in babies younger than 3 months of age.

Priority: Preventing Infant Deaths through Vaccination

There are currently no whooping cough vaccines licensed or recommended for newborns at birth. For this reason, three vaccination strategies are used in combination with each other to provide the best protection possible to newborns and young babies:

1. Vaccinate pregnant women in their third trimester to give their newborns short-term immunity.
2. Vaccinate family members and caregivers before they meet the baby.
3. Vaccinate babies on time, beginning at 2 months of age, so they build their own immunity.

Vaccines are Very Safe

Some individuals are choosing not to vaccinate their families or themselves because they believe vaccines are unsafe. Stories have circulated the media implicating vaccines in several diseases including autism spectrum disorder (ASD), but research does not support these claims. In fact, nine studies conducted since 2003 have found no link between ASD and vaccines. A 2013 CDC study of more than 1000 children indicated that receiving a vaccination in the first two years of age was not associated with increased risk for autism. Get the facts about vaccine safety before you decide not to vaccinate yourself or your children.

The Facts on Vaccine Safety:

 All vaccines used in the U.S. require extensive safety testing before they are licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

 FDA and CDC work with doctors and other health care professionals throughout the U.S. to monitor the safety of vaccines.

 Several systems are used to monitor the safety of vaccines after they are licensed and being used in the U.S.

 These systems can monitor side effects already known to be caused by vaccines, as well as detect rare side effects that were not identified during a vaccine’s clinical trials.

 One of the systems used to monitor the safety of vaccines after they are licensed and used in the U.S. is called the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS).

 VAERS accepts reports of adverse events (any possible side effects) that occur after vaccination. These reports come from health professionals, vaccine manufacturers, and the general public (vaccine recipients or their parents/guardians).

Parents, get answers to your questions about vaccines: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html
Vaccinations are Not Just for Kids!

All adults should get vaccines to protect their health. Even healthy adults can become seriously ill, and can pass certain illnesses on to others. Immunization is especially important for adults 60 years of age and older, and for those who have a chronic condition such as asthma, COPD, diabetes or heart disease. Immunization is also important for anyone who is in close contact with the very young, the very old, people with weakened immune systems, and those who cannot be vaccinated.

- **Influenza (flu) vaccine**: Each year to protect against the seasonal flu.
- **Td or Tdap**: Every adult should get the Tdap vaccine once if they did not receive it as an adolescent to protect against pertussis (whooping cough), and then a Td (tetanus, diphtheria) booster shot every 10 years.
- The need for other adult vaccines – such as shingles, pneumococcal, hepatitis, HPV – depends on one’s age, occupation, travel, health status, and other risk factors. See the table below for immunizations you may want to discuss with your health care provider.

### 2015 Recommended Immunizations for Adults by Age and Health Condition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pneumonia</th>
<th>Shingles (zoster vaccine)</th>
<th>Meningitis (Meningococcal)</th>
<th>MMR</th>
<th>Hepatitis A</th>
<th>Hepatitis B</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adults 60 years and older</strong></td>
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<td>COPD</td>
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<td>Heart Disease</td>
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<td>Chronic Liver Disease</td>
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*This information is for educational purposes and does not replace the advice of a health care provider. Talk with your health care provider about which vaccines are right for you.