



Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County

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HOT SHOTS - AUGUST 2016 **National Immunization Awareness Month**

Each year in August, the National Public Health Information Coalition sponsors National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness of the importance of vaccination for all ages. Immunization is a shared responsibility. Healthcare providers, administrators, and community leaders are encouraged to advocate for immunization coverage. Remind patients, friends, family, and coworkers that keeping current on vaccinations is the first line of defense against vaccine preventable diseases. August is a perfect time for this with parents enrolling children in school, teens coming in for sports physicals, older students entering college, and adults and the health care community preparing for the upcoming flu season.

Providers can increase immunization awareness by educating parents on why it is important for their children to get their shots on time. Avoid missed opportunities by assessing their patients' vaccine status at each visit. As teens come in for the required 7th grade Tdap and Meningococcal vaccine (MCV4), review their status for HPV, hepatitis A and varicella as well. When 12th grade students are in for the required second dose of MCV4, offer the Meningococcal B vaccine as well. Pregnant women should receive a Tdap and flu vaccine with each pregnancy. Check to see if your adult, elderly and high-risk patients are in need of any immunizations. As soon as it is available, recommend the influenza vaccine to everyone 6 months of age and older (as long as no contraindication exists). Health care providers should take appropriate steps to ensure that they are current on all of their immunizations as well.

Providers should be proactive in making sure that their patients' immunization records are included in the Statewide Immunization Registry. Registries assure better data collection, tracking, and access to records for patients and providers. Use of Statewide registries is recommended for ensuring appropriate immunization coverage. If you don't participate in the registry, be sure to give your patient a copy of their shot record and remind them to take it to every immunization and physical exam.

Providers and nursing staff should attend annual training updates on immunizations and vaccine preventable diseases in order to maintain safe practice and be prepared with current information for educating their patients. The Immunization Action Program staff at Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County can provide these trainings which offer continuing education credits. For information, call Beth Carnes, RN at 937-496-7698 or Linda Betts, RN at 937-224-8707.

Please use National Immunization Awareness Month as a reminder of the importance of keeping our communities healthy. You are your patient's most effective advocate as 80% of patients place the most trust for vaccine information in their physician. Your strong recommendation does make a difference!

For information on NIAM and immunization recommendations, please visit the following:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam.html>

Health Commissioner - Jeffrey A. Cooper, M.S. • Medical Director - Thomas Herchline, M.D.

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