



Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County

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APRIL 2016 – HOTSHOT National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW)

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is April 16 - April 23, 2016. NIIW is an annual observance to promote the benefits of immunizations and to improve the health of children two years old or younger. It highlights the importance of protecting infants from 14 vaccine-preventable diseases such as whooping cough and measles. Since the NIIW observance was established in 1994, hundreds of communities across the United States have joined together to celebrate the critical role vaccination plays in protecting our children, communities, and public health. It recognizes the achievements of immunization programs and their partners in promoting healthy communities.

Due to the success of vaccines in preventing disease, parents may not know about some of today's vaccines, the serious diseases they prevent, or that many diseases still circulate in the United States and around the world. These diseases can be especially serious for infants and young children. Even when diseases are rare in the U.S., they can still be commonly transmitted in many parts of the world and brought into the country by unvaccinated individuals, putting unvaccinated people at risk. It is important to follow the recommended immunization schedule to protect infants and children by providing immunity early in life, before they are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases.

An example of the seriousness of vaccine-preventable diseases is the increase in measles cases and outbreaks reported in recent years. Over the past few years, there have been a record number of measles cases in the United States. During 2014 alone, 667 cases were reported from 27 states. This is the largest number of cases since measles was eliminated in 2000. Most of these cases occurred as a result of being exposed to someone who got measles while in another country. In 2015, there were 189 people in the U.S. reported to have measles, most being part of a large outbreak linked to an amusement park in California.

NIIW has provided an opportunity to draw attention to these issues and to focus on solutions. Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. They not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases. Among children born during 1994-2013, vaccinations will prevent an estimated 322 million illnesses, 21 million hospitalizations, and 732,000 deaths over the course of their lifetimes.

Families, healthcare professionals, and public health officials must work together to help protect the entire community. As healthcare professionals, parents trust you for accurate information about vaccines for their children. You play a critical role in supporting parents in understanding and choosing vaccinations.

Thank you for doing your part by educating your patients on the importance of timely immunizations and keeping children vaccinated and healthy!

For more information about immunizations, please call 937-496-7698.

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

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