

# VACCINES FOR CHILDREN



Dallas County  
Health and Human Services

FALL 2012 - NEWSLETTER

## *National Immunization Awareness Month*



AUGUST  
2012

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## August is recognized as National Immunization Awareness Month

*Vaccines help prevent infectious diseases and save lives.*

Vaccinations are one of the most effective ways to protect children and adults against many common infectious diseases. Keeping individuals healthier through immunizations results in lower associated social and financial costs for families, including time lost from school and work, as well as the expense of medical bills. Recommended vaccinations begin soon after birth and continue throughout life, and it's important to get the right vaccines in the right doses at the right time.

August is recognized as National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness about immunizations across the life span, from infants to the elderly. August is the perfect time to remind family, friends, co-workers, and those in the community to catch up on their vaccinations. Parents are enrolling their children in school, students are enter-

ing college, and healthcare workers are preparing for the upcoming flu season. Immunizations are NOT just for kids! Regardless of your age, with adulthood comes responsibility, including the need to protect ourselves and our loved ones. Encourage other adults to check with their doctors for immunizations they may need to help protect against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Diseases that vaccines prevent can be dangerous, or even deadly. Vaccines greatly reduce the risk of infection. Disease prevention is the key to public health. It is always better to prevent a disease than to treat it. Vaccines prevent disease in the people who receive them and protect those who come into contact with unvaccinated individuals. Vaccines help prevent infectious diseases and save lives. Vaccines are responsible for the control of many infectious diseases that were once common in this country, including polio, measles, diph-

theria, pertussis (whooping cough), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib). Immunizations are an important part of public health, and Texas law requires students in Texas schools/Child Care Facilities to be immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases.

A good time to get these vaccines is during your child's scheduled check-ups, or a yearly health checkup for teens and preteens. It's a good idea to ask the doctor or nurse every year if there are any vaccines that your child may need.

### Overview of Adolescent Vaccination Recommendations

- All 11 or 12 year olds should receive a single dose of Tdap vaccine if they have completed the recommended childhood DTP/DTaP vaccination series and have not received Tdap
- All 11 or 12 year olds should receive a single dose of meningococcal vaccine, with a booster dose at age 16 years - 18 years of age
- All girls 11 or 12 years old should get 3 doses of either HPV vaccine to protect against cervical cancer; All boys 11 or 12 years old should get 3 doses of quadrivalent HPV vaccine to protect against genital warts and anal cancer
- All adolescents should receive a single dose of influenza vaccine every year

Immunizations are not just for children, preteens/teens or young adults. The specific immunizations you need as an adult are determined by factors such as your age, lifestyle, high-risk conditions, type and locations of travel, and previous immunizations. Some adults were never vaccinated as children and newer vaccines were not available when some adults were children. Immunity can begin to fade over time, and as we age, we become more susceptible to serious disease caused by common infections such as flu and pneumococcus.

### CAUTION

Any vaccine-preventable disease can strike at any time in the U.S. because all of these diseases still circulate either in the U.S. or elsewhere in the world. Sometimes vaccine-preventable diseases cause outbreaks (clusters of cases in a given area). Some of the vaccine-preventable diseases that still circulate in the U.S. include whooping cough, chickenpox, Hib (a cause of meningitis), and influenza. These diseases, as well as the other vaccine-preventable diseases, can range from mild to severe and life-threatening. In most cases, there is no way to know beforehand if a child will get a mild or serious case. For some diseases, one case is enough to cause concern in a community. An example is measles, which is one of the most contagious diseases known. This disease spreads quickly among people who are not immune.



**DCHHS**  
*Safe families, healthy lives.*

A group of seven people, including Mayor John Bel Edwards, are standing in front of an immunization booth. The booth features a large white banner with the word "IMMUNIZATIONS" in bold red letters. Below this, a smaller sign reads "Mayor John Bel Edwards" and "FREE". The group consists of a woman in a black shirt, a woman in a blue shirt and tan pants, a young man in a white polo shirt and khaki pants, a woman in a light blue button-down shirt, a woman in a blue button-down shirt, and a man in a yellow polo shirt. In the background, other people are visible at the booth, and a sign partially reads "Mayor John Bel Edwards" and "FREE".



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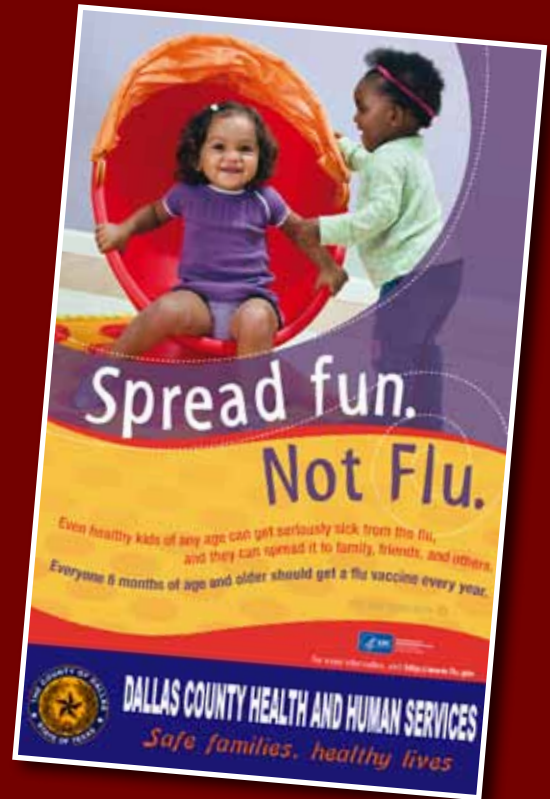


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## Ask your Provider about the Influenza Vaccine!

The Center for Disease Control recommends that people get vaccinated against influenza as soon as 2012-2013 flu season vaccine becomes available in their community. Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly from person to person through coughing, sneezing, or talking to someone with the flu. Flu viruses may also spread when people touch something with flu virus on it and then touch their mouth, eyes, or nose, and/or through contact of infected animals. Influenza seasons are unpredictable, they can begin early in the fall and last late into the spring. Getting a flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and your family.



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Parts or full contents used within this newsletter were extracted from the publications of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Texas Department of State Health Services website.



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