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HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
of Northwest Michigan

www.nwhealth.org

Make immunizations a part of your back-to-school routine

CHARLEVOIX – August’s arrival marks the final days of summer vacation and sets the stage for a new school year. August is also National Immunization Awareness Month—a perfect time to catch up on your child’s vaccinations to ensure protection in the year ahead.

The summer months are an ideal time for parents and guardians to make appointments for immunizations. Keeping up-to-date with vaccinations is vital to the health of the community, said Dr. Joshua Meyerson, Medical Director at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. “School-age children are at risk of illness, and they can further spread disease to their families and other community members—including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated, and people with weakened immune systems. Those who don’t receive recommended vaccines are vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases, which can be severe and life-threatening. Every dose of every vaccine is important to protect your child and others from infectious diseases.”

Child care settings and schools are more susceptible to outbreaks of infectious diseases due to close contact of students. Immunizing students against preventable diseases will help keep them healthy and in school. Today’s childhood vaccines protect against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases, including polio, measles, pertussis (whooping cough), meningitis, and chickenpox. Vaccination is a safe and effective way to prevent children from contracting these diseases, and will reduce the prevalence of serious diseases for future generations.

Dr. Meyerson also reminds parents and guardians about the recent change in Michigan’s school immunization requirements. While medical waivers may be issued by physicians, those who want to claim a nonmedical waiver for their child must receive education regarding vaccination and disease through their local health department.

Parents are encouraged to schedule an immunization appointment with their child’s physician, or call the Health Department at **(800) 432-4121** for both vaccination appointments and waiver education. The CDC’s recommended vaccination schedule is viewable at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules, or visit the Immunization Action Coalition at www.vaccineinformation.org for more information.

To learn more about immunizations and other Health Department services, visit www.nwhealth.org. The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties.