

April 23, 2014



National Infant Immunization Week is April 26 - May 3

SARASOTA COUNTY — Keeping infants and toddlers safe and protected is a top priority. The 20th annual National Infant Immunization Week, April 26- May 3, has been set aside to remind parents that keeping children safe and healthy includes protecting them from 14 serious diseases before age 2.

Vaccines are one of public health's greatest success stories because they prevent serious disease and death. "It's easy to think diseases like polio, whooping cough, and measles are diseases of the past, but the truth is they still exist," said Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) Medical Director Dr. William Heymann.

Immunization is a shared responsibility. Families, healthcare professionals and public health officials must work together to help protect the entire community.

Public health officials advise parents to talk with their child's health care provider or call the DOH-Sarasota about the vaccines that their baby or child may need. Doctors, nurses, physician assistants and other healthcare professionals can share scientifically accurate, up-to-date information about vaccines with parents.

Parents and guardians who keep a record of a child's vaccinations are urged to ask at each doctor's appointment if their child is up-to-date on immunizations.



Serious diseases may be prevented by following the guidelines and getting infants, young children and adolescents vaccinated on time.

One example of the seriousness of vaccine-preventable diseases is an increase in measles cases or outbreaks that were reported in 2013. Data from 2013 showed a higher than normal number of measles cases nationally and in individual states, including an outbreak of 58 cases in New York City that was the largest reported outbreak of measles in the United States since 1996. In recent

years, Sarasota County has experienced outbreaks of whooping cough or pertussis that could have been prevented with booster vaccinations.

Public health officials urge parents to seek out reputable and reliable, evidence-based information sources so they can make educated decisions about their family’s health.

For more on immunizations visit:

Facts for parents about immunizations: (DOH-Sarasota)	http://www.sarasotahealth.org/immunizations/immunizations-facts.htm
Childhood immunizations (DOH-Sarasota)	http://www.sarasotahealth.org/immunizations/immunizations-child.htm
Florida immunization schedule	www.immunizeflorida.org/
American Pediatric Association	http://www2.aap.org/immunization/
CDC	http://www2a.cdc.gov/nip/kidstuff/newscheduler_le/
World Health Organization	http://www.who.int/topics/immunization/en/

The DOH-Sarasota, through the federally funded Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, offers immunizations to eligible children at no cost. No appointment is needed. A parent or legal guardian must be present, and must bring prior shot records. Immunizations for eligible children are available at the following locations:

William L. Little Health and Human Services Center

941-861-2900

Immunization Clinic

2200 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota

Call for hours or check the website: www.sarasotahealth.org

North Port Health Center

941-861-3864

6950 Outreach Way, North Port

Call for hours or check the website: www.sarasotahealth.org.

Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities. View the complete policy at <https://www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx>.

MEDIA NOTES:

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