

August/September 2014

August National Immunization Awareness Month

Vaccinating on Time is Important for Disease Protection

Parents agree that feeding and sleep schedules are important to help keep their children healthy. The same goes for childhood immunizations. Vaccinating children on time is the best way to

protect them from 14 serious and potentially deadly diseases before their second birthday.

"The recommended immunization schedule is designed to offer protection early in life," said Dr. Anne Schuchat, Assistant Surgeon General and Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "when babies are vulnerable and before it's likely they will be exposed to diseases."

Public health and medical experts base their vaccine recommendations on many factors. They study information about diseases and vaccines very carefully to decide which vaccines kids should get and when they should get them for best protection.

Although the number of vaccines a child needs in the first two years may seem like a lot, doctors know a great deal about the human immune system, and they know that a healthy baby's immune system can handle getting all vaccines when they are recommended. Dr. Schuchat cautions against parents delaying vaccination. "There is no known benefit to delaying vaccination. In fact, it puts babies at risk of getting sick because they are left vulnerable to catch serious diseases during the time they are not protected by vaccines."

When parents choose not to vaccinate or to follow a delayed schedule, children are left unprotected against diseases that still circulate in this country, like measles and whooping cough.

For example, more than 48,000 cases of whooping cough were reported in the U.S. in 2012. During this time, 20 deaths were reported—the majority of these deaths were in children younger than 3 months of age.

In 2014, the U.S. has experienced the highest number of measles cases since it was eliminated from the U.S. in 2000. Staying on track with the immunization schedule ensures that children have the best protection against diseases like these by age 2.

Parents who are concerned about the number of shots given at one time can reduce the number given at a visit by using the flexibility built into the recommended immunization schedule. For example, the third dose of hepatitis B vaccine can be given at 6 through 18 months

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The mission of the Otsego County Health Department is to work in partnership with the community to improve and protect the health and well-being of all residents of Otsego County through health education, disease control and prevention, and public health preparedness.

September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

One in 3 children in the United States is overweight or obese. Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems that were once seen only in adults, like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

The good news is that childhood obesity can be prevented. In honor of National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, Otsego County Department of Health encourages your family to make healthy changes together.

- Get active outside: Walk around the neighborhood, go on a bike ride, or play basketball at the park.
- Limit screen time: Keep screen time (time spent on the computer, watching TV, or playing video games) to 2 hours or less a day.
- Make healthy meals: Buy and serve more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain foods.

Taking small steps as a family can help your child stay at a healthy weight.

For more information go to www.otsegocounty.com



Medicare Costs: Are they overwhelming you?



Medicare and Medicare prescription drug coverage come with premiums, deductibles and co-pays. All these costs can become prohibitive. Did you know that there are programs to help pay for these costs?

Medicare Savings Programs offer three different levels of assistance. All provide Extra Help with Prescription costs through Medicare D. Then depending on your income, they offer assistance with Medicare Part A and B Premiums and may offer assistance with coinsurance and deductible costs. These programs provide assistance to individuals with income up to \$1,333 and couples with income up to \$1,790 per month. There is no resource limit for these programs and

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of age. Parents can work with their child's health care professional to have their child get this dose at any time during that age range.

"I make sure my kids are vaccinated on time," said Dr. Amanda Cohn, pediatrician and epidemiologist at CDC's NCIRD. "Getting children all the vaccines they need by age 2 is one of the best things parents can do to help keep their children safe and healthy."

If you have questions about the childhood immunization schedule, talk with your child's doctor or nurse. For more information about vaccines, go to www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents.

**Millions of US Adults Needlessly at Risk of a Deadly Disease
Are You One of Them?**

As adults, getting vaccinated is one of the most important and easiest things we can do to protect our health—yet not enough of us do it. Vaccine-preventable diseases kill more American adults each year than HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, or traffic accidents.

A vaccination you may not know about protects against a common infection called pneumococcal disease. Pneumococcal disease can strike quickly and lead to death in just a few days. Each year, there are more than half a million cases annually, and thousands of Americans die from pneumococcal disease.

Some adults are more likely to get pneumococcal disease or have a more serious illness from it. That includes everyone age 65 and older and adults age 19-64 with heart, liver, or lung disease; diabetes; asthma; HIV/AIDS; and other conditions that affect the immune system; smokers; and alcoholics.

If you fall into one of these categories, you should be vaccinated, even if you consider yourself healthy. According to the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID), too many adults nationwide are unprotected from this infection.

Vaccination is a critical part of staying healthy at any age. To receive the best protection against pneumococcal and other deadly diseases, it's important for adults to contact their local health department or personal healthcare professional to talk about which vaccines are right for them.

Pneumococcal disease can be very serious and treatment may require hospitalization. Some patients may need weeks or months to recover before returning to normal activities. Getting vaccinated is the safest and most effective way to protect oneself. Even if vaccination does not prevent the infection, it can help reduce its severity, helping to keep you out of the hospital.

Medicare and most private insurance companies pay for pneumococcal vaccination for patients who need it. To speak with us about which vaccines you need, please contact Otsego County Public Health at **607-547-4230**.

expenditures for supplemental health insurance may be deducted from your monthly income.

But what if your income is just about these limits? There still may be a program to assist. Through the Social Security Administration you may be eligible for Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug costs. The income limit for this program is \$17,235 for a single person and \$23,265 for a couple per year. This program does have a resource limit of \$13,440 for an individual and \$26,860 for a couple. Some deductions may apply.

Staff at the Otsego County Office for the Aging and NY Connects of Otsego County is available to help Otsego County Resident living in the community review eligibility and to apply for any of these programs or others that may be helpful. Appointments are necessary. Please call Cooperstown at 607 547 4232, Oneonta at 607 432 9041 or toll free at 855 547 4390 if you have additional questions or would like to schedule an appointment.



UPCOMING HEALTH EVENTS

Immunization Clinics: You must pre-register prior to the clinic date. Call 547-4230. Children receiving immunizations must bring shot records. Children with private insurance must go to their pediatrician for vaccinations. All immunization clinics are 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

- 08/04/2014 Oneonta Clinic
- 08/11/2014 Cooperstown Clinic
- 08/18/2014 Oneonta Clinic
- 08/25/2014 Cooperstown Clinic
- 09/08/2014 Oneonta Clinic
- 09/14/2014 Cooperstown Clinic
- 09/22/2014 Oneonta Clinic
- 09/29/2014 Cooperstown Clinic

RABIES CLINICS

- **Aug 6th (Wed)** Oneonta Neahwa Park 6-8pm
- **Sept 9 (Tuesday)** Cherry Valley Town Barn 6-8pm
- **Sept 18 (Thurs)** Burlington Town Barn 6-8pm

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<http://www.otsegocounty.com/depts/doh/>

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