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Comanche County Health Department: Now is the Time to Vaccinate for School and Day Care

Getting all of the recommended vaccines is one of the most important things a parent can do to protect their child’s health, especially when they are in school or a day care center where disease outbreaks can occur. Whether it’s a baby starting at a new day care facility, a toddler heading to preschool, a student going back to elementary, middle or high school – or even a college freshman – parents should check their child’s immunization records.

Child care facilities, schools and colleges are highly susceptible to outbreaks of infectious diseases. Children can easily transmit illnesses to one another due to poor hand washing, uncovered coughs, and close contact with many people.

“When children aren’t vaccinated, they are at increased risk for disease and can spread disease to others in their classrooms and communities,” said Brandie Combs, Regional Director. “This includes babies too young to be fully vaccinated and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer or other health conditions.”

The Comanche County Health Department offers all required vaccines for school children and teens 18 years of age and younger at regular immunization clinics to be held Monday through Friday from 8 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 5 pm at Comanche County Health Department. Avoid the back to school rush and wait times by coming in now to get your child’s required vaccinations. Parents of children with private health insurance are encouraged to take their children to their regular health care provider or clinic to receive these vaccines.

Children attending day care facilities in Oklahoma must also be up-to-date for their age with childhood vaccines. The 2018-19 Guide to Immunization Requirements in Oklahoma for children in school or day care is available on the Oklahoma State Department of Health website at https://go.usa.gov/xUBvX

Kindergarten Students

Children entering kindergarten are due for boosters or second doses of four vaccines:

- MMR (measles, mumps and rubella vaccine)
- Polio
- DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccines)
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)

The second dose of chickenpox vaccine is recommended, but not required by Oklahoma’s school law.
Children who recently moved to Oklahoma may also need hepatitis A vaccination, which is required for students in all grades in Oklahoma. Students need at least one dose of hepatitis A vaccine to start school. A second dose is due six to 18 months later.

**Grades 7-12**

Students in grades 7-12 are required to have one dose of Tdap vaccine, which protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). This is necessary for adolescents and adults so they won’t contract whooping cough and infect babies and toddlers.

Parents and teens, both boys and girls, are strongly urged to ask their health care provider for HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine, which prevents several types of cancer. The recommendation is to start the HPV vaccination series at 11-12 years of age because the immune response to the HPV vaccine is better in pre-teens and can mean better protection later as the child progresses to adulthood. New guidelines for completion of the HPV vaccine series is now two doses separated by 6 – 12 months if the first dose is given before the child’s 15th birthday.

The meningococcal vaccine (MCV4) is also important for adolescent and teen health. The MCV4 vaccine protects against the devastating effects of bacteria that cause meningitis or a life-threatening bloodstream infection. Meningococcal disease is relatively rare, but if contracted, can cause death in less than 48 hours and leave those who survive with life-long problems such as brain damage or limb amputation.

MCV4 vaccination is recommended for all kids at 11-12 years of age with a booster of MCV4 at age 16. The meningococcal vaccine is required for first-time college students who will live in on-campus student housing. College students are also required to have MMR and hepatitis B vaccines.

For more information about immunizations, call the Comanche County Health Department at (580) 248-5890 or contact your health care provider.

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