



NEWS



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Schedule those Back-To-School Immunizations
*National Immunization Awareness Month is a reminder
that we all need vaccines throughout our lives*

BLOOMINGTON – Back-to-school season is here. It's time for parents to gather school supplies and backpacks. It's also the perfect time to make sure children are up to date on their vaccines and to schedule back-to-school immunizations. To celebrate the importance of immunizations for people of all ages, and make sure children are protected with all the vaccines they need, the McLean County Health Department is joining with partners nationwide in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness

Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. They not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases. But it's a shared responsibility -- families, healthcare professionals, and public health officials, must work together to help protect the entire community.

According to Illinois School Code, all children entering school must be immunized against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, varicella, and hepatitis B. The newly required *meningococcal conjugate (meningitis)* vaccine for students entering either 6th or 12th grades, protects against a severe form of bacterial meningitis as well as other illnesses caused by this bacterium.

The health department is currently taking appointments for back-to-school immunizations, but appointments are filling fast. Parents are encouraged to schedule school immunizations appointments now, before the last minute rush by call 309-888-5455. The health department accepts both private and public health insurance, as well as those without health insurance or wishing to pay out-of-pocket.

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New this year, the health department will also be providing school immunizations for students grades Pre-K through 12 in the Ridgeview School District during their school registration. In addition, high school students attending Bloomington High School, Normal Community High School and Normal West High School will also have an opportunity to receive back-to-school shots during their school registration sessions. Parents of children attending any of these schools should contact the school for more information about the on-site school vaccinations, or can visit the health department website at <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov> to learn more.

When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk for diseases and can also spread diseases to others in their classrooms and community – including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated, and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer or other health conditions. 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 a setting like a school or a child care center where disease outbreaks can occur.

For more information about National Immunization Awareness Month, or to make an immunization appointment for children or adults, please call 309-888-5455 (*children*) or 309- 888-5435 (*adults*). Available vaccinations include: tetanus; diphtheria; pertussis; hepatitis A & B; polio; human papillomavirus (HPV); measles, mumps, rubella; meningitis; pneumonia; varicella (chicken pox); shingles; and seasonal influenza (beginning in September).

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