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For Immediate Release

August is National Immunization Awareness Month

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness about immunizations across the life span, from infants to the elderly.

August is the perfect time to catch up your family, and remind friends, co-workers, and those in the community to update their vaccinations. Parents who are enrolling their children in school, students who are entering college, and healthcare workers who are preparing for the upcoming flu season are those who should pay close attention to their immunization record.

Why are immunizations important?

Immunization is one of the most significant public health achievements of the 20th century. Vaccines have eradicated smallpox, eliminated wild poliovirus in the United States, and significantly reduced the number of cases of measles, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis and other diseases. But despite these efforts, people in the U.S. still die from these and other vaccine-preventable diseases. According to Tabitha Cross MSEd, Chairperson of the Indiana Adult Immunization Coalition, "Vaccines offer safe and effective protection from infectious diseases. By staying up-to-date on the recommended vaccines, individuals can protect themselves, their families and friends and their communities from serious, life-threatening infections."

Who should be immunized?

Getting immunized is a lifelong, life-protecting community effort regardless of age, sex, race, ethnic background or country of origin. Recommended vaccinations begin soon after birth and continue throughout life. "Being aware of the vaccines that are recommended for infants, children, adolescents, adults of all ages and seniors, and making sure that we receive these immunizations, are critical to protecting ourselves and our communities from disease," said Cross.

When are immunizations given?

Because children are particularly vulnerable to infection, most vaccines are given during the first five to six years of life. Other immunizations are recommended during adolescent or adult years and, for certain vaccines, booster immunizations are recommended throughout life. Vaccines against certain diseases that may be encountered when traveling outside of the U.S. are recommended for travelers to specific regions of the world.

Additional Resources

A variety of resources promoting immunization can be found at www.immunizeadults.org.

The Indiana Adult Immunization Coalition is a voluntary group of health and older adult focused organizations dedicated to eradicating vaccine preventable deaths and disease among adults. The Coalition promotes education and outreach activities to increase awareness of and participation in adult immunizations.