



News Release

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Start the School Year Off Right by Getting Vaccinated

National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) Celebrates Importance of Vaccines

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Back-to-school season is just weeks away, and that means parents/guardians are out getting supplies, new clothes and back packs. It's also the perfect time to make sure your kids are up to date on their vaccines against rare, but serious diseases.

To emphasize the importance of immunizations for everyone, and to make sure that children in particular are protected with all of the vaccines they need, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is joining the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month.

"Getting children all of the vaccines recommended by CDC's immunization schedule is one of the most important things parents can do to protect their children's health and that of classmates and the community," said ODH Medical Director Dr. Mary DiOrio. "If you haven't done so already, now is the time to check with your doctor to find out what vaccines your child needs, and when."

Unvaccinated children are at increased risk for contracting vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, mumps and rubella. They also may spread diseases which are serious or potentially life-threatening for high-risk individuals such as infants who are too young to be fully vaccinated and others who have weakened immune systems due to other health conditions.

Beginning with the Fall 2016 school year, a new meningococcal vaccine requirement takes effect under Ohio Law. All incoming seventh graders must have one dose of the meningococcal vaccine, and all incoming twelfth graders must have a second dose of the vaccine. CDC also says that it is recommended routinely for some high risk individuals and that it may also be given to anyone 16 through 23 years of age to provide short term protection against most strains of serogroup B meningococcal disease as a permissive recommendation. More information on the meningococcal vaccine requirements can be found at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/bid/immunization/imunchsc.aspx>.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, Ohio Chapter (Ohio AAP) and ODH suggest parents download the free "Fast Vax Facts" app, available in the App Store and on Google Play. "Fast Vax Facts" is a new app featuring valuable, pediatrician-approved immunization resources for parents and guardians. A link to the App can be found at www.OhioAAP.org/FVF.

ODH has also started a new back to school public awareness campaign. The campaign features [radio](#) and television ads that you can hear across the state. Parents should check with their child's doctor, school or the local health department to learn more about specific requirements.

For more information on vaccines, visit www.odh.ohio.gov, keyword Immunization.

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