

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 8, 2017

Contact: Office of Communications 614.644.8562

Be Prepared for Back-to-School; Get Your Children Vaccinated

National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) Celebrates Importance of Vaccines

COLUMBUS – Summer is almost over and that means it’s time for parents to begin thinking about back-to-school season. Along with the back-to-school necessities such as folders and backpacks, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) wants to remind parents to make sure their kids are up-to-date on their vaccines against serious diseases.

To emphasize the importance of vaccinations, and to make sure that children are protected with all the immunizations they need, ODH is partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month.

“When parents are thinking about their back to school checklists, vaccines should be at the top of the list,” said ODH State Epidemiologist and Bureau Chief of Infectious Diseases Sietske de Fijter. “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 as well as the health of classmates and the community.”

Unvaccinated children are at an increased risk for contracting vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, mumps and rubella. They also may spread diseases, like pertussis, 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 health conditions.

“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,” said de Fijter.

This fall will be the second school year that the new meningococcal vaccine requirement is in effect under Ohio Revised Code. 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.

ODH is currently running a back-to-school public awareness campaign that features [radio](#) and television ads that you can hear and see across the state. Parents should check with their child’s doctor, school or local health department to learn more about specific requirements.

For more information on the meningococcal vaccine and other vaccination requirements, visit <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/immunization>.

###