



ONEIDA COUNTY
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August is National Immunization Awareness Month *Oneida County Emphasizes Importance of Vaccinations*

August is National Immunization Awareness Month, and Oneida County officials are reminding residents that vaccinations are not just for children. From babies to senior citizens, vaccinations can protect people of all ages from serious diseases.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), immunizations are one of the top 10 public health accomplishments of the 20th century. Vaccination is important because it not only protects the person receiving the vaccine, but also helps prevent the spread of diseases to others-especially those who are most vulnerable to serious complications, such as infants and young children, the elderly, and those with chronic conditions and weakened immune systems.

“It is so important for children to get their shots on schedule, for their health, and the health of the community,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. “But there are many other age groups who should also stay on top of immunizations to remain safe and healthy.”

All children from infant through grade 12 should stay on the recommended immunization schedule, and parents should track their child’s immunizations records. As of June 13, 2019, New York State eliminated all non-medical vaccination exemptions for public, private and parochial schools, pre-K through grade 12, which includes, child care centers, day care and nursery schools and charter schools. This means all children without a valid medical exemption issued by a licensed physician in New York State must be vaccinated or they will be excluded from school.

“When it comes to immunizations, the time to start thinking about back to school is now,” said Oneida County Director of Health Phyllis D. Ellis, BSN, MS, F.A.C.H.E. “If parents wait too long to make appointments, vaccinations could run in short supply, or their children could be excluded from school.”

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In addition to required public school vaccinations:

- Both pre-teen boys and girls should receive the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to protect against certain types of cancer.
- College students should also be reminded of the importance of getting the meningococcal vaccine if they will be living in dorms while away from home.
- Individuals traveling outside the United States should consider certain vaccines.
- Pregnant women should be up-to-date on vaccines in order to help prevent illnesses and complications and to protect their unborn children.
- Adults need a Tetanus Diphtheria (TD) booster every 10 years, and depending on age and health, should consider vaccines against shingles, pneumococcal, hepatitis and influenza.

Immunization is especially important for older adults and for those who have a chronic condition such as asthma, COPD, diabetes or heart disease. Immunization is also important for anyone who is in close contact with the very young, the very old, people with weakened immune systems and those who cannot be vaccinated.

Residents should contact their health care provider with questions about their or their child's immunization schedule.

More information on public school vaccination requirements, including measles and the new law regarding the elimination of non-medical vaccination exemptions, is available on Oneida County Health Department's website: www.GetMeaslesAnswers.com.