



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Celebrate one of the Greatest Achievements in Public Health this August

Weld County, CO – We all need shots (also called vaccinations or immunizations) to help protect us from serious illness. To help keep our community safe, the Weld County Health Department is participating in the National Immunization Awareness Month in August.

Immunizations represent one of the greatest public health accomplishments of the 20th century. Before vaccines, millions of people died worldwide from highly contagious diseases such as small pox. Other diseases that used to be common, are now rare, including measles, mumps, pertussis, tetanus, and polio. Modern vaccines are safe and save lives. The public is encouraged to speak with their health care professional about which vaccines are right based on age, health, job, lifestyle and other factors.

Parents are encouraged to make sure children are up to date on vaccines. Children are at an increased risk for disease and can spread disease to others in play groups, child care centers and classrooms, and to babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer and other health conditions.

“Getting children vaccinated according to recommended immunization schedules is one of the most important things parents can do to protect their children from serious diseases,” said Mark E. Wallace, MD, MPH, Executive Director for the Weld County Health Department. “Now is the time to check with your health care professional or our immunizations clinic to find out what vaccines your child needs.”

Vaccines can protect babies from 14 serious diseases before turning age 2. After 6 months of age, children are recommended to receive the annual flu vaccine, and additional vaccines between ages 4 and 6. It’s very important that babies receive all doses and receive each one on schedule.

If a child falls behind the recommended immunizations schedule, vaccines can still be given to “catch-up” before adolescence.

Pre-teen and teen vaccines protect against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases, including meningitis, cancers caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), tetanus and whooping cough (pertussis).

Young adults also need vaccines to stay protected, especially when college-bound, because protection from childhood vaccines can wear off with time. College students may be at increases risk for vaccine-

preventable diseases like meningococcal disease.

There are misconceptions that vaccines are just for children, but people never outgrow the need for immunizations. They are recommended throughout life based on age, lifestyle, occupations, travel and medical conditions. Each year, tens of thousands of adults in the U.S. needlessly suffer, are hospitalized, and even die from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines. Even healthy adults can become seriously ill and pass certain illnesses on to others.

Women should stay current on vaccines before becoming pregnant, including an annual flu shot (which is safe during pregnancy). Additionally, pregnant women should receive a vaccine against whooping cough (pertussis) during each pregnancy, preferably at 27 through 36 weeks. These vaccines protect mom and baby.

Women who are planning to become pregnant should talk to their provider, prior to becoming pregnant, to determine if vaccines are needed.

Talk to your doctor or nurse to make sure that everyone in your family get the shots they need. To learn more, visit: www.weldhealth.org.

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