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Mid-Michigan District Health Department
615 N. State St., Stanton, MI 48888-9702
www.mmdhd.org
SUBMITTED BY/MEDIA CONTACT: Leslie Kinnee
989-831-3669, kinnee@mmdhd.org



Vaccines aren't just for kids; teens and adults need them too

Stanton, MI- Most parents are vigilant when it comes to making sure their children receive all recommended vaccinations, but adults are urged to remember that they too need protection from vaccine preventable diseases.

Vaccinations have the ability to protect against numerous diseases. Unfortunately, many Michigan adults are under-vaccinated, putting themselves and their families at risk.

“Most adults don’t realize how important it is that they continue to get vaccinated against serious diseases, and that it’s a lifelong process,” said Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director for the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD). Graham went on to say that vaccinating adults also protects infants, children, seniors and individuals with weakened immune systems.

Take for instance whooping cough, a highly contagious respiratory disease, which has been on the rise in recent years in the U.S.; including Michigan. People 13-64 who have not yet received the Tdap vaccine should be vaccinated at their next healthcare visit, and those 65 years or older should be vaccinated if they live with or care for infants less than 12 months of age. It is especially important that those in contact with infants get vaccinated against whooping cough, including pregnant women, new parents, siblings, grandparents, day care and child care workers, and health care personnel.

Also on the rise in the U.S. and internationally is another highly contagious disease, measles. Adults who haven’t received the MMR vaccine should get immunized right away. It is especially important for those planning to travel abroad to be vaccinated against measles, as many of the cases throughout the U.S. have been brought in from other countries.

Parents should ensure that their teens receive a booster dose of meningococcal (meningitis) vaccine at 16-18 years of age as well as college students 19-21 years of age who haven’t received the vaccine in the past five years. Other adults may also need this vaccine, so be sure to check with your doctor.

Adults should also make sure they are protected against other diseases such as pneumonia, shingles, chickenpox, tetanus, human papillomavirus, and hepatitis A and B.

And last, but certainly not least, flu season is definitely in full swing. Make sure that everyone in your household, over the age of six months, receives their yearly flu shot to be fully protected. If you, or someone in your family, has not already been vaccinated, not to worry; there is still time!

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Don't go without protection from preventable diseases! Make sure to ask your doctor what vaccines you may need at your next visit.

For more information, visit www.adultvaccination.org or call MMDHD at 989-224-2195 in Clinton County, 989-875-1019 in Gratiot County, or 989-831-5237 in Montcalm County.

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.
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