

PORTAGE COUNTY COMBINED GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

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Portage County Health Department recognizes April 18-25 as National Infant Immunization Week

National Infant Immunization Week is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and to celebrate the achievements of immunization programs in promoting healthy communities throughout the United States. Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. They not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases.

Because of the success of vaccines in preventing disease, parents may not have heard of some of today's vaccines or the serious diseases they prevent. These diseases can be especially serious for infants and young children. That is why it is important to follow the recommended immunization schedule to protect infants and children by providing immunity early in life, before they are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases.

Vaccine-preventable diseases still circulate in the United States and around the world, so continued vaccination is necessary to protect everyone from potential outbreaks. Even when diseases are rare in the U.S., they can still be commonly transmitted in many parts of the world and brought into the country by unvaccinated individuals, putting unvaccinated people at risk. One example of the seriousness of vaccine-preventable diseases is the increase in measles cases and outbreaks that were reported in recent years. In 2014, 644 people in the U.S. were reported as having measles. This is the largest number of cases in the U.S. since measles was eliminated in 2000.

"Portage County Health Department is committed to increasing up-to-date rates of children being completely vaccinated by 2 years of age for all vaccine-preventable diseases," states Rosemary Ferraro, director of nursing. The health department participates in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program which provides vaccines to children who are underinsured or whose parents or guardians may not be able to afford them. The VCF program helps children get their vaccines according to the recommended immunization schedule and has contributed directly to a substantial increase in childhood immunization coverage levels, making a significant contribution to the elimination of disparities in vaccination coverage among young children.

The Portage County Health Department provides Childhood Immunization Clinic every Wednesday from 8:00am-12:00 noon. The clinic is located at 705 Oakwood Street, 2nd floor, Ravenna. PCHD also provides Childhood Immunization Clinics every third Wednesday of the month at Kent City Health Department from 3-5pm and every fourth Tuesday at Windham Renaissance Family Center from 11am-3pm. All clinics are walk-in clinic, no appointment necessary. Call PCHD Nursing Clinic at 330-298-4490 for questions.

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