



Johnson County Government Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Jennifer Dunlay, Risk Communicator

jennifer.dunlay@jocogov.org

Johnson County Department of Health and Environment Media Line: (913) 477-8436

August is National Immunization Awareness Month

JCDHE recommends getting kids vaccinated before going back to school

JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS (Aug. 1, 2012) – Immunizations help protect us all from serious diseases. To help keep our local community safe, the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) recommends parents and caregivers get their children's immunizations up-to-date before going back to school.

Immunizations can prevent infectious diseases like chickenpox, whooping cough, measles and meningitis. Though vaccine-preventable diseases may seem uncommon, Kansas continues to investigate cases and outbreaks of these diseases on a regular basis. Johnson County experienced a pertussis outbreak earlier this year resulting in 261 reported cases between January and July. During the same time period in 2011, Johnson County had 38 reported cases of pertussis.

"Vaccines are the best way parents, caregivers and families can prevent vaccine-preventable diseases. National Immunization Awareness Month is the perfect time to stop by our Olathe or Mission walk-in clinic and get the entire family up-to-date," says Lougene Marsh, JCDHE director. JCDHE's walk-in clinics are open a variety of hours to serve Johnson County citizens. Walk-in clinic hours are posted on JCDHE's website: <http://health.jocogov.org/IMM/school.shtml>

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 17,000 cases of pertussis (whooping cough) and nine pertussis-related deaths have been reported in the U.S. so far this year. The majority of these deaths occurred among infants younger than three months of age who were either unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated yet. The incidence rate of pertussis among infants exceeds that of all other age groups. The second highest rates of pertussis disease are observed among children 7 through 10 years old. Rates are also increased in adolescents 13 and 14 years of age.

(more)

Immunizations work, but in order to work correctly it's important to know which immunizations or vaccinations you need and when to get them. Vaccinations work best when they are given at certain ages. Here are some general guidelines:

- Everyone over age 6 months needs a seasonal flu vaccine each year.
- Children need a series of vaccinations from birth to age 6.
- Pre-teens need recommended vaccinations at age 11 or 12, as well as teenagers as they enter into high school and college.
- Adults need a variety of vaccinations to prevent diseases such as whooping cough, pneumonia, flu, shingles and more.

For more information on 2012 immunization requirements, visit JCDHE's website at <http://health.jocogov.org/IMM/immunize.shtml> or the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's website at: <http://www.kdheks.gov/immunize/index.html>.

#

About Johnson County

Nestled in the southwestern quadrant of the Kansas City Metropolitan Region, Johnson County, Kansas is a community of choice with a current population of more than 544,000, making it the most populated of the 105 counties in Kansas, but traditionally having the lowest mill levy in the state. Johnson County offers a vibrant quality of life including nationally recognized schools, libraries and parks where businesses and families choose to locate and call their home. For more information visit the county's website at www.jocogov.org.

