

August is National Immunization Awareness Month

Who needs Immunizations? Everyone. An annual “Flu Shot” for protection against Influenza is recommended for all persons 6 months of age and older.

A baby is born with limited protection against some diseases if their mother is current with her immunizations. They should receive their first immunization before they ever leave the hospital and be fully immunized against 14 Vaccine Preventable Diseases before their second birthday. These diseases include Hepatitis A & B, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Measles and Chicken Pox.

In the 2017 Minnesota Measles Outbreak, 71 of the 78 infected persons (cases), had received **NO** Measles vaccination with an additional 3 cases having received only 1 dose, not the recommended 2 doses of MMR.

Children receive boosters to immunizations they received as infants at age 4-6, usually when they start kindergarten.

Adolescents/teens need additional immunizations against, HPV and Meningitis, as well as a Tdap booster at 11-12 years of age.

Adults too, need immunizations. The following vaccines are routinely recommended for Adults.

The 2 pneumococcal vaccines (Pneumococcal 13 & Pneumococcal polysaccharide (PPSV23), Zoster (against Shingles), Hepatitis A & B and Td/Tdap.

Td/Tdap is routinely given every 10 years. But if you have an injury and it has been more than 5 but less than 10, it is recommended that you receive your booster at that time.

To assist in making an informed science based decision about vaccination, it is important to understand how vaccines work.

To understand how vaccines work, it is helpful to first look at how the body fights illness. When germs such as bacteria or viruses invade the body, they attack and multiply. This invasion is called an infection and the infection is what causes you to feel sick.

The first time your body encounters a germ, it must develop a defense to fight it off. This process is done by the immune system and can take several days. Once infected, the immune system remembers how to protect the body against that specific germ, so the next time you are exposed to it, your body can respond faster to protect you against illness.

Vaccines work much like the body’s natural immune system, they help your body develop a defense (immunity) by imitating an infection. The vaccines do not cause you to get the disease/infection, but as your immune system develops its defenses, it is possible to experience minor symptoms like a fever or body aches, but you do not get the actual disease. This process also takes time (days to weeks), therefore, it is possible for you to get the disease even though you have been vaccinated, if you were exposed to the disease before your body developed its defenses against the germ(s).

Immunizations are available from your medical provider and at some pharmacies. Not all vaccines are available at all locations, so call and talk with them about which vaccines they provide, the cost, and about what insurance plans including Medicare and Medicaid/BadgerCare+ they serve.

Washburn County Health Department offers the recommended infant, child, and adolescent vaccines and a limited number of adult ones. These vaccines are offered at No Charge or for the suggested donation of \$5.00, call 715-635-4400 for details.

For assistance in applying for BadgerCare+ contact NorthLakes Community Clinic @ 715-466-2201 or Washburn County Health Department @ 715-635-4400 to schedule an appointment.

To schedule an appointment to complete an affordable Care Act application contact NorthLake Community Clinic @ 715-466-2201 or Northwest Cep @ 715-635-2175.