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“DON’T WAIT – VACCINATE!”

Pennsylvania Issues New School Vaccination Requirements

Delaware County Council and the County Department of Intercommunity Health alert families that the state has issued new school immunization requirements.

The Pennsylvania State Department of Health (DoH) has updated its school immunization requirements for vaccines that take effect August 1. The changes were made to update the Pennsylvania school immunization requirements to more closely match recommendations by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

Changes may affect some students in grades K-12, with additional requirements for students entering seventh grade.

Dr. George Avetian, the County Senior Medical Advisor, said all children should be immunized at regular health care visits with the initial vaccinations beginning at birth. These immunizations are very important in protecting children from communicable diseases. He said it’s important for parents to review their children’s records now, while they are still in school, to see if their child has the required vaccines.

The recommended childhood and adolescent schedule advises these shots commencing at birth and going through 24 months of age, with boosters and catch-up vaccines continuing through the teenage years and into the adult years.

“By immunizing, we safeguard our children against the potentially devastating effects of vaccine preventable diseases,” Dr. Avetian said. “No child should suffer the effects of vaccine preventable diseases because he or she did not receive immunizations on time. Immunization is the most effective preventative health measure available.”

Dr. Avetian suggests that parents check with their physician or the school nurse to make sure their child is up to date on their vaccines.

(more)

(School immunizations continued)

The new Pennsylvania school immunization requirements are:

For ATTENDANCE in all grades in 2011/2012, children need the following:

- 4 doses of tetanus*
- (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of diphtheria*
- (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- 3 doses of polio
- 2 doses of measles**
- 2 doses of mumps**
- 1 dose of rubella (German measles)**
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine or history of disease

*Usually given as DTP or DTaP or DT or Td

**Usually given as MMR

Additionally, children ATTENDING seventh grade in 2011/2012 need the following:

- 1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap)
(If 5 years has elapsed since last tetanus immunization)
- 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV)

The full list of immunization requirements effective Aug. 1 for the 2011-2012 school year is available at:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/immunizations/14141/school_children_immunizations/557995

For more information visit the Delaware County Intercommunity Health page at: www.co.delaware.pa.us.