



Health and Human Services MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 13, 2016

Protect your children, immunize them

22nd Annual National Infant Immunization Week: April 16–April 23

SARASOTA COUNTY —Protect your children from 14 serious diseases before age two with vaccinations. April 16–April 23 is National Infant Immunization Week, a reminder for parents to talk with their child’s health care provider or call the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) about vaccines their baby or child may need.

Vaccines are one of public health’s greatest success stories because they prevent serious disease and death. “It is easy to think diseases like polio, whooping cough, and measles are diseases of the past, but the measles outbreak on our nation’s west coast that spread to several states shows us these diseases do return when we let our guard down,” says Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) Medical Director Dr. William Heymann.

“In the past, we had good ‘herd or community immunity’ to protect those too young or too ill to be vaccinated. When parents opt not to vaccinate due to misinformation about vaccines, we lose that protection.”

Serious diseases and hospitalization, disability and even death may be prevented by getting infants, young children and adolescents vaccinated on time. [Click here](#) to view stories of parents who lost children to vaccine-preventable diseases, because they were not vaccinated.

Health officials say immunization is a shared responsibility; families, health care professionals and public health officials must work together to help protect the entire community. “Education is the key,” says DOH-Sarasota Immunization Program Manager Donna Keith. “Health care professionals can share scientifically-accurate and up-to-date information about vaccines. We have a dialogue with parents seeking reassurance about the value of vaccines and the risks to their child and others if their children are not vaccinated.”



CDC Image: Mother with healthy baby up-to-date on immunizations

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MEDIA NOTES:

DOH-Sarasota Media Contact:

Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; cell 941-302-1058; DOHSarasotaNews@flhealth.gov

Website: www.sarasotahealth.org



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Parents who are doing their own research on vaccines are encouraged to visit these websites:

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| American Academy of Pediatrics | http://www2.aap.org/immunization/ |
| CDC | http://www2a.cdc.gov/nip/kidstuff/newscheduler_le/ |
| DOH-Sarasota | http://sarasota.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/clinical-and-nutrition-services/immunizations/immunizations-facts.html |
| Every Child By Two | http://www.ecbt.org/ |

DOH-Sarasota offers immunizations to uninsured or underinsured children at no cost. Bring insurance card if your health insurance plan covers vaccines. Early morning hours are best for walk-in services and appointments are also available. A parent or legal guardian must be present. Bring prior shot records.

William L. Little Health & Human Services Center

2200 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota
 Walk-in services begin at 7:30 a.m.
 Call for [hours](#) or to request an appointment
 941-861-2900

North Port Health Center

6950 Outreach Way, North Port
 Call for [hours](#) or to request an appointment
 941-861-3864

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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For more information, visit www.sarasotahealth.org or call 941-861-2900.

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 View the complete policy at www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx

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