



## Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County

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### **HOTSHOT – APRIL 2017** **National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW)**

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) will be recognized April 22-29, 2017. It is an annual observance to promote the benefits of immunizations and to improve the health of children two years old or younger. NIIW celebrates the successes of immunization programs around the country and highlights the importance of immunizing. Since 1994, NIIW has served as a call to action for parents, caregivers, and healthcare providers to ensure that infants are fully immunized against 14 vaccine preventable 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. An example of the seriousness of vaccine preventable diseases is the increase in measles cases or outbreaks that were reported in 2014. The United States experienced a record number of measles cases, with 667 cases from 27 states reported to CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. This was the greatest number of cases in the U.S. since measles was eliminated in 2000. In recent years, there have been pertussis and mumps outbreaks as well.

Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. They protect vaccinated individuals and help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases. Routine childhood immunization in one birth cohort prevents about 20 million cases of disease and about 42,000 deaths. It also saves about \$13.5 billion in direct costs. Healthcare professionals like you are why we can celebrate high infant immunization rates in this country. A doctor's recommendation was the #1 reason that parents made sure their child got all of the recommended vaccines.

NIIW is a great opportunity for the entire practice—including physicians, nurses, and receptionists—to show parents that your practice strongly supports vaccination according to the CDC's recommended immunization schedule. It's also a good chance to let parents know that on-time vaccination is the norm, despite what they might hear in the media. Here are some ideas for ways that your practice can celebrate NIIW this year:

- “Launch” NIIW by bringing in breakfast or lunch for your staff. Use this opportunity to discuss ways that your entire practice can promote NIIW to parents. Decorate the waiting room with balloons, streamers, posters, and coloring sheets (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/coloring.html>).
- Promote NIIW on Facebook or Twitter. CDC has sample tweets and Facebook posts that you can use during NIIW and throughout the year (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/promotional/web-tools/social-media.html>)
- Run an article in your practice's newsletter or on your website or take out an ad in your local newspaper reminding parents to ensure that their children's vaccines are up to date. .
- Play CDC videos (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/resources/childhood.html>) in your waiting room or link to them on your website.
- Print fact sheets on vaccine safety and vaccine-preventable diseases and display them in your waiting room or exam rooms (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/prevent-diseases/provider-resources-factsheets-infants.html>)

By making NIIW an event for your entire practice, you can raise awareness about the importance of immunization for protecting children in your community and be a strong voice in support of CDC's recommended immunization schedule.

**Thank you for doing your part in keeping children vaccinated and healthy!**  
**For more information about immunizations, please call 937-496-7698.**

Health Commissioner - Jeffrey A. Cooper, M.S. • Medical Director – Michael Dohn, M.D. MSc  
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