

District Health Department #4

100 Woods Circle, Suite 200
Alpena, MI 49707
(989) 356-4507 or 1-800-221-0294
www.dhd4.org



For Media Contact Only:

Cathy Goike
cgoike@dhd4.org
(989) 358-7970

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Health Department Reminds Residents Vaccinations are Important

As a result of confirmed cases of Hepatitis A and Mumps in NE Michigan, District Health Department No. 4 (DHD4) would like to remind residents that vaccinations are the best defense.

Immunizations are the number one public health achievement of the last century, saving millions of lives and preventing illness and lifelong disability in millions more. Many childhood diseases are preventable by vaccines often resulted in hospitalization, death or lifelong consequences only a few decades ago. Without immunizations, serious outbreaks of many preventable diseases may occur.

Hepatitis A and Mumps are vaccine-preventable diseases. "Ensuring children and adolescents are current on all recommended vaccines is one of the most important things parents can do to protect their student's health. This makes the decision to immunize your child an important one especially since there are no effective alternatives to immunization," said Joshua Meyerson, MD, Medical Director for District Health Department #4. "Immunizations not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but they also help protect the entire community by reducing and preventing the spread of infectious diseases."

Vaccine-preventable diseases, such as mumps, chicken pox, meningitis, pertussis (whooping cough) and others, are still experienced in Northern Michigan. Unimmunized or under-immunized school-age children are at risk of these illnesses, and they can further spread disease to their families and other community members. Babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated and people with weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable.

"Every dose of every vaccine is important to protect your child and others from infectious diseases", said Dr. Meyerson.

Cheboygan County
Doris E. Reid Center
825 S. Huron St., Suite 1
Cheboygan, MI 49721
(231) 627-8850
Fax (231) 627-9466

Montmorency County
P.O. Box 183
12519 State St.
Atlanta, MI 49709
(989) 785-4428
Fax (989) 785-2217

Presque Isle County
106 E. Huron St.
Suite A
Rogers City, MI 49779
(989) 734-4723
Fax (989) 734-3866

Immunizations can save your family time and money. A child with a vaccine-preventable disease will be kept out of schools or daycare facilities. A prolonged illness can take a financial toll on families because of lost time at work, medical bills, or long-term disability care. In comparison, getting vaccinated against these diseases is a good investment and usually covered by insurance. The Vaccines for Children program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay. To find out more about the VFC program, visit, <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/> or ask your child's healthcare provider.

Appointments for immunizations are available in Alpena, Cheboygan, Montmorency and Presque Isle counties at Health Department offices. For additional information about infant, child, adolescent and adult immunizations, contact your family's health care provider or local health department or visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules or www.vaccineinformation.org.

For more information on the vaccines and clinic locations, call 1-800-221-0294 or visit our website at www.dhd4.org. For more information about Hepatitis A outbreak in Michigan and current recommendations please go to www.mi.gov/HepatitisAoutbreak.

District Health Department No. 4 serves Alpena, Cheboygan, Montmorency and Presque Isle counties since 1930. Our mission is to promote and protect the health of people and the communities where we live, learn, work and play.

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