



COUNTY HEALTH MATTERS

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CONTACT:

Shawn Kelsch
Warren County Health Department
636-456-7474

**Infant Immunization Week
April 25 – May 1, 2004**

**Vaccination an Act of Love
Love them. Protect them. Immunize them.**

Vaccines are one of the 20th Century's most successful and cost-effective public health tools for preventing serious disease and death. Diseases that were once common-place, such as polio, measles, mumps, whooping cough, diphtheria, and rubella, are now only distant memories for most Americans.

Today, there are few reminders of the suffering, disabilities, and premature deaths caused by diseases that are now preventable with vaccines. Most of today's parents have never seen these diseases and the suffering they can cause. However, these diseases are not diseases of the past. They still exist, in many parts of the world and with the ease of international travel, are still a threat to America's children.

A decision to vaccinate a child not only prevents the child from developing a potentially serious disease, but also helps protect the entire community by reducing the spread of infectious agents. Parents need to become informed consumers and ask questions of their health care provider. They should keep a record of each immunization visit. Even if they think their child is up-to-date, they should ask their health care provider about immunizations at every visit.

Almost everyone knows that children need to have their vaccinations before they can begin kindergarten or first grade. What many parents don't know is that children need 80% of their vaccinations before they're even two years old. Vaccinations are easy to obtain and are provided at little or no cost through most local public health departments.

Some newborns receive their first immunization shortly after birth while still in the hospital. When following a standard immunization schedule a child should have vaccinations at 2, 4, 6, 12, and 15-18 months of age. Catch-up schedules can be created for children who fall behind, the important thing to remember is that children should have their primary series of immunizations done by the time they are two years old.

For more information on immunizations call the Warren County Health Department at 636-456-7474 or visit or website at <http://warren.lphamo.org>.