



Press Release

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Time for Back-to-School Immunizations

Galveston County and Cities –The new school year finds many parents busy shopping for uniforms, school supplies and other activities. The Galveston County Health District reminds parents that they also need to make sure their children's immunizations are up to date and remember that schools require that children be properly immunized.

Dr. Mark Guidry, Galveston County Health Authority, says "Vaccines are a great public health achievement. Every year, our immunization clinics see hundreds of parents and children seeking to meet school-entry vaccination requirements. The back-to-school rush is our largest immunization effort each year. While we are glad to see children receiving required immunizations we remind parents the best protection is having their children immunized on time and by doing so they can avoid the long lines during the back-to-school rush."

The Health District operates several immunization clinics but they are not all large enough to accommodate the increased numbers seeking services during the back to school rush. Due to space limitations immunization clinics in Dickinson and Texas City are relocated to facilities in La Marque where the Health District will be hosting their sixth annual *Kids Health Fest*, August 4th through the 27th to better accommodate the crowd and related activities.

Vaccinations will be given in the La Marque office at 1207 Oak Street, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Wednesdays immunizations will be given from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

A second location where immunizations may be obtained is the Galveston Immunization Clinic in the Island Community Center at 4700 Broadway which will be open on Mondays and Fridays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Parents are asked to bring their child's immunization record with them. Some children may already be in the electronic immunization registry, known as ImmTrac. For those children all a parent needs to provide is the child's name and date of birth to verify needed immunizations. If there is no record for a child, parents will be given the opportunity to enroll their child in ImmTrac which make their child's immunization records electronically available in frequent circumstances when parents do not have a paper immunization record available.

Staff will also be using this time to educate parents about the dangers of lead poisoning and encourage testing of children one to six years of age.

Volunteers and incentives will be used to make the experience of getting an immunization as pleasant as possible. Members of the Health District's Immunization Advisory Council have assisted efforts by meeting regularly to brainstorm innovative ideas on how to reach more kids. "We want to make sure that getting shots is as pleasant an experience as possible for both parents and children," says Dr. Cassandra Arceneaux, Director of Community Health Programs. "We appreciate and welcome community support in terms of volunteers and donations for incentives."

At various times during the event kids may find a variety of things to occupy their time while waiting like visiting fire trucks, ambulances and animals from the Galveston County Joe Vickery Animal Shelter.

The Galveston County Health District includes both childhood and adult immunizations in its strategic health plan which is a tool guiding their activities through 2010.

For more information on Galveston County Health District immunization activities or to volunteer time or needed incentives such as children's stickers, books, tokens or entertainment, call (409) 938-2244 or visit www.gchd.org.