



Guest Column

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The new school year is just around the corner, and it's time to start preparing. The Galveston County Health District would like to remind parents that making sure their children's immunizations are up to date is another task they should not overlook.

Schools require that children are properly immunized. Making sure a child is adequately vaccinated is not only about meeting the state's back-to-school immunization requirements. For our children to be fully prepared for school, they must also be adequately protected from vaccine preventable diseases. There is no better way to do so, than making sure immunizations are up-to-date and given "on-time," according to schedule.

By ensuring that children receive immunizations, a parent can prevent their child from acquiring illnesses such as; Hepatitis B, Measles-Mumps-Rubella, Chickenpox and influenza - just to name a few.

Immunizations are safe and effective, protecting your child's health as well as protecting others around them. Vaccines are one of history's most successful and cost-effective public health tools for preventing serious disease. Deadly diseases that were once common-place are now only distant memories for most Americans.

While vaccines are very successful, infections caused by vaccine-preventable disease still occur in Galveston County and cities, reminding us that the risk of outbreaks still exists. For example, in 2009, there were 7 identified cases of whooping cough – a disease that can be life threatening to young children.

So remember to bring your child to your provider or to the Health District's *Kids Health Fest 2010*. At this event, children can receive all needed back-to-school immunizations and enjoy some activities such as coloring contests and door prizes. The *Kids Health Fest* will take place at Mall of the Mainland in Texas City, August 5th through the 25th. Immunizations will be given Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Much appreciation is extended to Mall of the Mainland for the use of their facility which better accommodates the expected larger number of people during this annual back-to-school rush. For questions concerning *Kids Health Fest* call (409) 938-2244.

Immunize your child and provide him/her with the protection needed for a healthy school year!

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