



Health district plans immunization drive

By Galveston County Health District

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The Galveston County Health District is reminding parents that Texas law requires students to be immunized against certain vaccine-preventable diseases.

Each year in August, the importance of back-to-school immunizations is emphasized as part of National Immunization Awareness Month.

“Vaccines are an important part of public health,” Dr. Mark Guidry, head of the county health district, said.

“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.

Because of space limitations, immunization clinics in Dickinson and Texas City will be moved to Mall of the Mainland in Texas City for the annual Kids Health Fest, Thursday through Aug. 25, to better accommodate the crowd and related activities.

All health district immunization clinics will be closed Wednesday to allow staff time to prepare and set up Kids Health Fest.

Vaccinations will be given at Mall of the Mainland from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesdays; and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.

A second site where immunizations can be obtained is the Galveston Immunization Clinic in the Island Community Center, 4700 Broadway, which will be open 8 a.m. to 11:30 and 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesdays.

Parents are asked to bring their child’s immunization record with them. Some children already might 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.

At various times during the event, kids can 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.

For the first time, college freshmen and students in Texas also need to make sure their immunization records are up to date.

A state law, which went into effect Jan. 1, requires first-time students of public or private institutions of higher education who plan to live in on-campus dormitories or other on-campus housing facilities to show evidence of vaccination against bacterial meningitis.

For information on immunization activities or to volunteer, call 409-938-2244, or visit www.gchd.org.

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