



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Vermont Celebrates National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW)

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BURLINGTON - The Vermont Department of Health is asking parents and healthcare providers to check immunization records for infants and young children during National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW).

NIIW 2010 (April 24 - May 1) is a call to action to ensure that children are immunized against 14 preventable diseases that can cause serious illness, or lead to life-threatening disease for children who are unprotected.

Vermont earned praise from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention earlier this month for the nation's second highest vaccination rate for children ages 6 months to 17 years (72 percent) against the H1N1 influenza virus. Health Commissioner Wendy Davis, MD, hopes to build on the momentum and awareness gained during the H1N1 vaccination campaign.

"We hope parents and healthcare providers will continue to focus on the importance of protecting infants and children against all preventable diseases," Dr. Davis said. "Diseases prevented by vaccination can be far more serious among infants and young children."

Children younger than age 2 years are at the highest risk for diseases caused by pneumococcal bacteria, which may be present as pneumonia, meningitis or a blood infection (sepsis). Before the pneumococcal vaccine was used routinely, an estimated 200 children died each year of pneumococcal disease. In March, a new vaccine that protects against more different types of pneumococcal disease was recommended for use in children.

As recently as 2003, Vermont had among the nation's highest childhood immunization rates, however currently (2008) only 65 percent of children in Vermont up to age 3 received their full series of universally recommended vaccines.

The recommended immunization schedule for babies includes protection against all of the following diseases:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Influenza
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Pneumococcal disease
- Polio
- Rubella (German measles)
- Tetanus (lockjaw)
- Rotavirus
- Varicella (chickenpox)

Make sure that your child is protected against all vaccine-preventable diseases. Talk to your child's healthcare provider about whether or not your child is up to date on immunizations.

For more information on the immunization schedule and childhood vaccines, visit healthvermont.gov.

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