**Our Mission**

“To assure the highest possible level of health for the people of the communities we serve.”

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**Adult Immunization Programs**

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department has become a provider for Medicare Part D immunizations, due to increased requests for immunizations by Medicare Part D enrollees. The most frequently requested immunizations are the Zostavax (Shingles) and Tdap (Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis). The Health Department can now confirm co-pays and bill Medicare Part D for these immunizations.

For those without Medicare Part D or private insurance coverage for immunizations, the Michigan Vaccine Replacement Program provides the Tdap vaccine as well as the Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and MMR (Measles-Mumps-Rubella) vaccines.

Another option for those without insurance coverage for immunizations is the Merck Patient Assistance Program. If you are income eligible (for example a person with a family size of 2 and a gross income of $60,520 may qualify), we will assist you in completing a short application for the Merck Patient Assistance Program. This program provides Zostavax (Shingles), Pneumococcal, Varicella (Chickenpox) and Gardasil (Human Papillomavirus) vaccines.

Shingles is a painful skin rash, often with blisters. It is also called Herpes Zoster. A Shingles rash can last from 2-4 weeks. Its main symptom is pain which can be quite severe. Other symptoms of Shingles can include fever, headache, chills and upset stomach. For 1 person in 5, sever pain can continue even long after the rash clears up. Only someone who has had chickenpox can get Shingles. The virus stays in your body and can cause Shingles many years later. The Shingles vaccine is recommended for adults 60 years of age and older.

Tdap (Tetanus- Diphtheria-Pertussis) protects against 3 bacterial diseases. Diphtheria and pertussis are spread from person to person. Tetanus enters the body through cuts, scratches, or wounds. Tdap is the first vaccine for adolescents and adults that protects against pertussis or whooping cough. People with pertussis usually have painful spasms of coughing. It is highly contagious and is spread by coughing and sneezing. An infant’s windpipe is much smaller than that of older children; babies are much more likely to die from pertussis. Babies typically catch the disease from teenagers and adults living in the same home. The availability of Tdap will finally allow adolescents and adults to be protected against pertussis and reduce the chance that babies will be infected with the bacteria.

*(Cont. on pg. 3)*
May is Food Safety Month

With summertime quickly approaching and backyard barbecues and family picnics on the horizon, the Health Department wants to take the opportunity to reinforce proper food handling and inform Michigan residents that food safety is not an option, but an obligation. Consumers need to know simple steps they can take to prevent foodborne illness.

As the temperature rises, so does the risk of foodborne illness. Hot, humid weather creates the perfect conditions for the rapid growth of bacteria. Summer also means more people are cooking outside at picnics, barbecues, and camping trips without easy access to refrigeration and hand washing facilities to keep food safe.

To minimize the risks of foodborne illness, follow these four easy steps when handling and preparing food:

Step One – Clean
Wash hands and surfaces often to avoid the spread of bacteria.

- Wash your hands with hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before handling food and after handling raw meats or poultry, using the bathroom, touching pets or changing diapers.

Always wash raw fruits and vegetables in clean water. You cannot tell whether foods carry surface bacteria by the way they look, smell or taste.

Step Two – Separate
Keep raw meats and poultry separate from cooked foods to avoid cross-contamination.

- When you pack a cooler for an outing, wrap uncooked meats and poultry securely, and put them on the bottom to prevent raw juices from dripping onto other foods.

Wash all plates, utensils, and cutting boards that touched or held raw meat or poultry before using them again for cooked foods.

Step Three – Cook
Make sure you kill harmful bacteria by properly cooking food.

- Traditional visual cues like color are not a guarantee that food is safe. Don’t guess! Take a digital instant-read food thermometer along to check when meat and poultry are safe to eat. Cooked foods are safe to eat when internal temperatures are:
  - 68°C (155°F) for ground beef or pork meat
  - 74°C (165°F) for leftover food and boned and deboned poultry parts
  - 74°C (165°F) for whole poultry

Step Four - Chill: Keep cold food cold

- Perishable foods that are normally in the refrigerator, such as luncheon meats, cooked meat, chicken, and potato or pasta salads must be kept in an insulated cooler with freezer packs or blocks of ice to keep the temperature at or below 5°C (41°F).

- Put leftovers back in the cooler as soon as you are finished eating.

The simple rule is: When in doubt, throw it out.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department serves the residents of Dickinson and Iron counties. For information about infectious disease prevention and services, visit www.didhd.org or call (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.

Think Spring!!
(Cont. from pg. 1) ... Pneumococcal disease is caused by bacteria that can lead to serious infections of the lungs, blood and covering of the brain. The Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV) protects against 23 types of pneumococcal bacteria, including those most likely to cause serious disease. The Pneumococcal vaccine is recommended for adults 65 years of age and older and anyone 2–64 years of age with long-term health problems or an adult 19 years and older who is a smoker or has asthma.

Chickenpox (Varicella) is a common childhood disease. It is usually mild, but it can be serious, especially in young infants and adults. It causes a rash, itching, fever, scars, pneumonia, brain damage or death. Most people who get chickenpox vaccine will not get chickenpox. But if someone who has been vaccinated does get chickenpox, it is usually very mild. Persons, 1 year and older, who have never been vaccinated or had chickenpox disease should receive the vaccine.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted virus. Most HPV infections don’t cause any symptoms and go away on their own, but HPV can cause cervical cancer in women. In addition, HPV can cause genital warts and anal cancer in both women and men. The HPV vaccine is recommended for persons 11 through 26 years of age.

For an appointment or more information about these services, please call the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-4166.

National Infant Immunization Week

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department announced that National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW), April 20-27, 2013, is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and celebrate the achievements of immunization programs and their partners in promoting healthy communities. Since 1994, NIIW has served as a call to action for parents, caregivers, and healthcare providers to ensure that infants are fully immunized against 14 vaccine-preventable diseases.

Parents agree that feeding and sleep schedules are important to help keep their children healthy. The same goes for childhood immunizations. Vaccinating children on time is the best way to protect them against 14 serious and potentially deadly diseases before their second birthday.

The recommended immunization schedule is designed to offer protection early in life when babies are vulnerable and before it’s likely they will be exposed to diseases.

Public health and medical experts base their vaccine recommendations on many factors. They study information about diseases and vaccines very carefully to decide which vaccines kids should get and when they should get them for best protection.

Although the number of vaccines a child needs in the first two years may seem like a lot, doctors know a great deal about the human immune system and they know that a healthy baby’s immune system can handle getting all vaccines when they are recommended. There is no known benefit to delaying vaccination. In fact, it puts babies at risk of getting sick because they are left vulnerable to catch serious diseases during the time they are not protected by vaccines.

When parents choose not to vaccinate or to follow a delayed schedule, children are left unprotected against diseases that still circulate in this country, like measles and whooping cough. In 2010, more than 27,000 cases of whooping cough were reported nationally with 27 deaths – 25 of which were infants.

For more information or to schedule an appointment for immunizations, please call the Health Department at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.
The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department, in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Community Health Oral Health Program, is pleased to announce its participation in the **Varnish! Michigan-Babies Too** project. The goal of this initiative is to provide fluoride varnish to children under 3 years of age, who are at high risk for dental decay. Children enrolled in the health department’s Women, Infant and Children nutrition program (WIC), will be eligible for this new service.

Project services include: a caries risk assessment, parent oral health education, an oral screening, and a fluoride varnish application on all exposed teeth. The screening and application will be completed by registered nurses, all of whom have completed training in these procedures and have received certification to apply the varnish. The children are eligible to receive up to four fluoride varnish applications per 12 month period.

As part of this project we have contacted local dental offices and have developed a list of all dental providers in the area. Children with identified concerns on screening will be referred to these local providers. Families with children enrolled in MI-Child and Healthy Kids will be given a list of providers who accept this insurance.

We are very happy to have the opportunity to assist in promoting the dental health of high-risk children in this community.

**Please feel free to contact our WIC offices at 774-1868 or 265-9913 or our Community Health Services Director, Joyce Ziegler, RNC, with any questions, concerns or feedback on this new program.**