



# Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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## Dickinson County

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## News Release

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**Immediate Release**

## Adult Immunization Programs

Kingsford, Michigan – May 9, 2013. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is now a provider for Medicare Part D immunizations. The Health Department can confirm co-pays and bill Medicare Part D. The most frequently requested immunizations are the Zostavax (Shingles) and Tdap (Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis).

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 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) and you do not have insurance coverage for immunizations, 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 about 1 person in 5, severe 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.

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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.

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) used to be 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, it 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) 265-9913.

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