



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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Before School Year Starts, Get Up to Date with Vaccines

(HARRISBURG, PA.) August, designated as National Immunization Awareness Month, is right around the corner. Today, the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) would like to remind all Pennsylvanians to make sure they are up-to-date with immunizations. This is especially important for parents of school students.

In 2011, the Pa. Dept. of Health published new school vaccine regulations. Those updates, in accordance with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), advised additional immunization requirements, including one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) and one dose of tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap) for students entering seventh grade. Children in all grades need four doses of tetanus; four doses of diphtheria; three doses of polio; two doses of measles; two doses of mumps; one dose of rubella; three doses of hepatitis B; and two doses of varicella (chickenpox) or evidence of immunity.

The PAFP encourages parents to make appointments now with their children's pediatrician or family medicine physician. It's important that children receive vaccines at their physician-led medical home as part of their regular well exam to ensure the correct immunizations are administered, obtain the required documentation for their school district, and to have a trusted provider on-hand in the event of an adverse reaction.

Now is a good time for families to establish a medical home for their children if they don't have one: medical homes provide not only vaccine visits, but present a great opportunity for parents to address any other issues they're concerned about and that may require monitoring or follow-up care.

The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians and its Foundation supports its members (including nearly 80 percent of Pennsylvania family physicians) through advocacy and education to ensure a patient-centered medical home for every Pennsylvanian. The Academy and its Foundation are the leading influential resource among family physicians and physicians in training in Pennsylvania; the primary voice on health care issues with state legislative and administrative branches of government, media and professional health organizations; and the leader on health care issues in the community.

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