

July 08, 2013

News Release

For Immediate Release

Mass clinics to provide vaccinations and training

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department will hold a pair of mass vaccination clinics during July in partnership with the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services. The clinics are an exercise intended to help local public health agencies train staff and educate the public about how mass vaccination clinics work in the case of an emergency.

However, the clinics are not just a dry run. These non-emergency clinics will provide the Tdap vaccine to the public at no cost. The state health department is providing the vaccine at no cost to local health departments thanks to a federal grant.

The Tdap vaccine is a three-in-one vaccination that protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). It is a common and effective vaccine, and one that children are required to have—for school enrollment in Missouri. A 2010 change in state law requires students entering 8th grade to have a Tdap booster.

Immunization against pertussis, or whooping cough, is especially crucial right now as the number of confirmed cases have increased dramatically in recent years. In 2012, the number of illnesses soared to more than 41,000 nationwide – more than any other year since 1955, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. Whooping cough is extremely contagious and long-lasting, and it is very dangerous for infants. More than half of infants less than 1 year of age who get pertussis are hospitalized, and they are often infected by parents, older siblings, or other caregivers who might not even know they have the disease. According to a new national poll from C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, 61 percent of adults don't know when they were last vaccinated against pertussis.

"This a great opportunity to take a simple, no-cost step to help protect your health and the health of everyone around you," said Pam Bryant, MA, RN, CPHA, Administrator of Maternal, Child & Family Health Programs at the health department.

The clinics will be held from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Thursday, July 18 and Tuesday, July 23 at the Westside Public Health Center, 660 S. Scenic Ave. in Springfield. Anyone age 11 or older can receive the vaccine regardless of their insurance coverage status. Vaccinations will be administered on a first-come, first-served basis. Children ages 11 to 18 must bring a vaccination record with them to the clinic.

Who should receive a Tdap vaccination?

- Children ages 11 and up
- Students entering 8th grade this fall

- Any adult who is primary caretaker or is often around infants
- Pregnant women (during each pregnancy)
- Anyone who has not had a tetanus or -Tdap booster in the last 10 years
- Anyone wanting immunization from tetanus, diphtheria or pertussis

For more information about clinic hours and procedures, or to find out if a Tdap vaccination is right for you, contact the Westside Public Health Center at (417) 874-1220. Residents of other counties are encouraged to contact their local health department to find out if those agencies are participating in this program. Dates and times are being left up to the local agencies.

Note to media

A Tdap clinic for first-responders will be held from 1:30-4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 9. This clinic is not open to the public, but the media are invited to attend to obtain video or photos in advance of the July 18 public event. Health Department staff will be available for interviews at this time as well.

For more information contact: Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, (417) 874-1205.