Immunizations Should Top Back to School List

Dr. Takashi Wada, Santa Barbara County Public Health Director/Health Officer, urges parents to make sure their children are fully immunized before classes start this fall. By law, California schools must review children’s immunization records to ensure that students have received all required shots for school entry. Immunizations are available through your private doctor, community health clinics, and Public Health Department immunization clinics.

Immunizations remain a safe and effective way to keep the children of Santa Barbara County healthy and in school. Vaccines help control many infectious diseases that were once common in this country, including chickenpox, hepatitis, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), and polio. High immunization rates of 93% in 2009 for all Santa Barbara County Kindergarten entrants are expected to continue as schools and health care providers work closely with families during back to school registrations. In the wake of a statewide outbreak, Santa Barbara County Public Health is urging middle school students to get vaccinated for whooping cough before classes start.

Although the Whooping Cough vaccination is not required to start in middle school, “Receiving the booster vaccination at 10-12 years of age is an important tool to prevent the spread of whooping cough in our schools,” Dr. Takashi Wada noted.

The Public Health Department (PHD) would also like to remind parents that all children six months and older are now recommended to be immunized against seasonal influenza. For more information about California school immunization requirements, vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases, parents should contact their child’s physician, school nurse, the Public Health Department Immunization Project at 346-8420, or visit www.GetImmunizedCA.org.

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