



Provider Alert
National Immunization Awareness Month
August 2018

To celebrate the importance of immunizations for people of **all** ages – and to make sure children are protected with all the vaccines they need as they go back to school, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is joining with community partners in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM).

Healthcare professionals like you are an important reason why we can celebrate high kindergarten vaccination rates. In fact, kindergarten rates for the 2017-2018 school year were over 96% in Santa Barbara County.

The latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows vaccination rates for adults are low (*National Health Interview Survey, 2015*). For example, only 20 percent of adults have received a Tdap vaccine. Even high-risk groups are not getting the vaccines they need—only 20 percent of adults 64 years or younger who are at increased risk for complications from pneumococcal disease are vaccinated. Every year, thousands of adults in the U.S. become needlessly ill from infectious diseases. Many adults are hospitalized and some even die from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines

Healthcare professionals are a valued and trusted source of health information. Your patients rely on you to let them know which vaccines are necessary and right for them. We encourage you to use every patient encounter as an opportunity to assess whether any vaccines are needed. If the patient is due for a vaccine, make a strong recommendation that you advise getting the vaccine because it can help protect them against a disease that could be serious. For some patients, this may be sufficient information to accept the vaccine. Others may want to learn more about the vaccine and why it is right for them. For these patients, *sharing* the following can help them make an informed decision.

- **Share** the tailored reasons why the recommended vaccine is right for the patient, given his or her age, health status, lifestyle, job or other risk factors.
- **Highlight** positive experiences with vaccines (personal or in your practice) to reinforce the benefits and strengthen confidence in vaccination.
- **Address** patient questions and any concerns about the vaccine, including side effects safety and vaccine effectiveness in plain and understandable language.
- **Remind** patients vaccines protect them and their loved ones from many common and serious diseases.

- Explain the potential costs of getting vaccine-preventable diseases, including serious health effects, time lost (missing work or family obligations) and financial costs.

Here are some resources to help promote vaccinations in your practice:

Provider Resources for Vaccine Conversations with Parents

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/index.html>

CDC: Spanish Language Immunization Website

<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/inmunizacion/index.html>

2018 Immunization Schedules for Children, Adolescents and Adults

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/child-adolescent.html/>

Parent-Friendly Vaccine Website

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html>

***Thank you for raising awareness about life-saving vaccines and for supporting
Immunization Awareness Month!***

