On September 6th the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors proclaimed September as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, acknowledging the problem of childhood obesity in Santa Barbara County and the efforts of the Public Health Department and other organizations to combat obesity among local children.

Childhood obesity has reached epidemic levels in the United States. An estimated 23 million children and teenagers age two to 19 are overweight or obese, triple the rate of 30 years ago. Diabetes and other weight-related health problems have increased among children as well as adults in recent years. 80% of obese children will become obese adults. For the first time in history, children may have shorter life expectancies than their parents.

In Santa Barbara County, about 30% of children in grades 5-9, and 34% of teens, are overweight or obese. One-third of 2-5 year olds, and 46% of 5-19 year olds, from lower income families are overweight or obese. According to the County’s 2011 Community Health Status Report, just over half of local children, and only 17% of area teens, eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Nearly two-thirds of children eat fast food one or more times per week, and 29% of teens consume two or more glasses of soda or other sugary drinks each day. Santa Barbara County has three times as many convenience stores and fast food restaurants as supermarkets and produce vendors. Further, only 39% of local children are physically active the recommended one hour per day, and 12% are completely sedentary.

The Public Health Department is collaborating with local schools, non-profits, medical providers, and other organizations to develop a comprehensive, long-term obesity prevention plan. The plan will address environmental strategies that promote healthy weight, such as increasing access to healthy foods and increasing the walkability of communities, as well as educational and fitness programs for children and adults.

Working with CenCal Health, Sansum Diabetes Research Institute and the Diabetes Resource Center, the Public Health Department is offering the Prescription for Wellness for medical providers to give to children and parents. The provider completes the “prescription” identifying desired interventions related to nutrition, physical activity, support and other areas. A Resource Guide with listings of available programs and services at no cost or low cost has also been developed to inform medical providers and families.

To access these and other tools go to the Public Health website under Health Resources: http://www.countyofsb.org/phd/default_all.aspx?id=28930&menu2id=554
Influenza Season 2011-12 Update

Flu vaccine virus strains
- This year’s flu vaccine contains the same virus strains as the one formulated last flu season. These include, A/California/7/2009 (H1N1), A/Perth/16/2009 (H3N2), and B/Brisbane/60/2008.
- Since protection from flu vaccine has been shown to decline over time, annual vaccination is recommended for optimum protection against influenza, even in seasons in which vaccine virus strains do not change. Please encourage your patients to get vaccinated for the best protection against flu.

Influenza dosing - Influenza dosing for children 6 months to 8 years of age
- If the child received 1 or more doses of the 2010-2011 seasonal influenza vaccine, then only one dose of flu vaccine is needed.
- If the child did not get the 2010-2011 seasonal influenza vaccine or if the influenza immunization history is unknown, then two doses of the flu vaccine are needed.

Febrile seizures and flu vaccine
- One brand of inactivated flu vaccine, called Afluria, should not be given to children 8 years of age or younger, except in special circumstances. A related vaccine was associated with fevers and fever-related seizures in young children in Australia.
- In consultation with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the CDC and FDA have reviewed vaccine safety data on febrile seizures in the United States following 2010-11 inactivated influenza (flu) and pneumococcal conjugate (PCV 13) vaccines. The febrile seizures were most common in children ages 12 through 23 months when the two vaccines were given during the same healthcare visit. In this group, about one additional febrile seizure occurred among every 2,225 children (0.04%) vaccinated. CDC and FDA will continue to monitor the safety of all recommended vaccines and will provide additional information as it becomes available.
- Influenza and PCV13 immunizations are still recommended to young children to protect them against these dangerous diseases.

Please visit us at www.sbcphd.org/IZ for information on community flu clinics

Santa Barbara Breast Cancer Resource Center
Breast cancer was the 8th leading cause of death among women in Santa Barbara County in 2008, responsible for 42 female deaths that year. 412 new cases of breast cancer were diagnosed among local women in 2008. The Santa Barbara Breast Cancer Resource Center recently received a grant from the Mentor corporation to provide free screening mammograms, diagnostic mammograms, and ultrasounds to lower-income uninsured women not covered by other programs.

See www.bcrcsb.org/page.cfm?id=35 for more information