

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For More Information Contact**

Sylvia Bond, public health nurse sr., Radford City Health Department, 540-831-5774, ext. 109

## **GET THE VACCINES YOU NEED; PROTECT THE ONES YOU LOVE**

*-- August is National Immunization Awareness Month --*

(CHRISTIANSBURG, Va.) – Did you know that immunizations (also called vaccines or shots) are for all ages, from babies to older adults? Vaccines help protect us from serious diseases such as pertussis, polio, measles, diphtheria, rubella, influenza, meningitis and pneumonia. Many of these diseases are rare because of vaccines; however, they still exist and can lead to missed days at work or school, hospitalizations and premature deaths.

As parents and caregivers make final preparations for children to enter or return to school, the New River Health District reminds them to review the required shot schedule and make sure children get the vaccinations they need, so they can start school on time.

“As you help your children get ready for school, make sure they are fully vaccinated,” said Molly O’Dell, MD, director of the New River Health District. “Making sure that children of all ages receive all their vaccinations on time is one of the most important things parents can do to not only ensure their children’s readiness for school but also their long-term health -- as well as the health of friends, classmates and others in the community.

“Vaccines offer safe and effective protection from infectious diseases. We want everyone to know that vaccination now will prevent the serious effects of certain diseases in the future; diseases like polio and meningitis that infect, cripple and kill children,” Dr. O’Dell emphasized.

Be sure everyone in the family gets the immunizations they need. Vaccines for older children and adults are determined by factors such as previous immunizations, age, medical history, lifestyle, high-risk conditions and the types and locations of travel. For example, pertussis cases continue to circulate in the New River Valley and all adults who have contact with children are urged to update their immunizations.

To determine which vaccines you may need or to make an appointment, please call your health care provider or local health department:

- Floyd County Health Department, 540-745-2141;
- Giles County Health Department, 540-921-2891;
- Montgomery County Health Department, 540-381-7100; or
- Pulaski County Health Department, 540-994-5030.

For more information, visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/immunization](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/immunization) or [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html).