

Blast Communication

National Infant Immunization Week
April 16-23, 2016

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is set for April 16-23, 2016 to promote the benefits of immunizations and to improve the health of children two years old or younger. Since 1994, local and state health departments, national immunization partners, healthcare professionals, community leaders from across the United States, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have worked together through NIIW to highlight the positive impact of vaccination on the lives of infants and children, and to call attention to immunization achievements.

Several important milestones already have been reached in controlling vaccine-preventable diseases among infants worldwide. Vaccines have drastically reduced infant death and disability caused by preventable diseases in the United States. In addition:

- Through immunization, we can now protect infants and children from 14 vaccine-preventable diseases before age two.
- In the 1950's, nearly every child developed measles, and unfortunately, some even died from this serious disease. Today, many practicing physicians have never seen a case of measles.
- Routine childhood immunization in one birth cohort prevents about 20 million cases of disease and about 42,000 deaths. It also saves about \$13.5 billion in direct costs.
- The National Immunization Survey has consistently shown that childhood immunization rates for vaccines routinely recommended for children remain at or near record levels.
- It's easy to think of these as diseases of the past. But the truth is they still exist. Children in the United States can—and do—still get some of these diseases.
- One example of the seriousness of vaccine preventable diseases is an increase in measles cases or outbreaks that were reported in 2014. The United States experienced a record number of measles cases, with 667 cases from 27 states reported to CDC. This was the greatest number of cases in the U.S. since measles was eliminated in 2000.

NIIW provides an opportunity to:

- Highlight the dangers of vaccine-preventable diseases, especially to infants and young children, and the importance and benefits of childhood immunizations.
- Educate parents and caregivers about the importance of vaccination in protecting their children from birth against vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Focus attention on our immunization achievements and celebrate the accomplishments made possible through successful collaboration.
- Encourage better communication between parents and health care professionals.
- Remind parents and caregivers they need to make and keep needed immunization appointments.

For questions or concerns regarding this blastfax or any other immunization information, please contact the Chapter's Immunization Coordinator, Mike Chaney at (404) 881-5094 or mchaney@gaaap.org