

Township of Manalapan

BOARD OF HEALTH

120 Route 522 • Manalapan, NJ 07726 • 732-446-8345 • Fax 732-446-1576

Website: www.mtnj.org



August is *NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH*

Vaccines are extremely important. They teach our immune system to recognize and destroy bacteria and viruses before they can cause illness. Vaccines contain antigens (bacteria and viruses) that have been weakened or killed so that they don't cause disease. When the antigens enter the body, they make the immune system produce antibodies (proteins) that attack it. If the vaccinated person is ever exposed to that disease again, they will not get sick because their immune system "remembers" the antigen and their body already has the antibodies for that antigen. This makes them immune to that disease.

There are vaccines for over 25 different diseases. Childhood vaccines can prevent many serious diseases including measles, influenza, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, diphtheria, polio, tetanus, chickenpox, mumps, HPV, and many more. If you are vaccinated for a disease, you will likely never have to risk getting that disease. It is important to keep vaccinations up-to-date for children AND adults.

Vaccines are important for a few reasons:

- **THEY PROTECT US FROM DISEASE.** Vaccines prevent diseases from occurring in the first place, rather than attempt to cure them afterwards. Curing these diseases can be expensive and time-consuming, and some can even be deadly. Vaccines are especially important in children since their bodies are usually not strong enough to fight disease. If they are not vaccinated, their risk of becoming ill is even greater. Vaccines can save their lives.

- **THEY PROTECT THE PEOPLE AROUND US.** Some people (young babies and people with severe allergies or weakened immune systems) are unable to receive certain vaccines. It is extremely important for the rest of us to be vaccinated so we can protect these people. Their only hope of protection is that everyone around them is vaccinated and will not pass the disease on to them.
- **THEY CAN HELP ELIMINATE A DISEASE.** If we keep vaccinating, we may be able to completely eradicate a disease in the future. Smallpox was completely eliminated due to widespread vaccination programs. Other diseases, like polio and measles, could also be eliminated if we keep using vaccines. If we stop vaccinating against these diseases, they will definitely make a comeback.

Despite what some people may think, vaccines are completely safe. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) tests all new vaccines for up to 10 years before they are approved for use. Vaccines are only given to people after a long and careful review by scientists and doctors to make sure they are safe. Like most medication, vaccines may cause side effects. These are usually mild and go away within a few days. The most common side effects are fever and redness or soreness where the shot was given. Serious side effects are extremely rare. There is no scientific data that shows that vaccines are a risk factor for any diseases.

Even though vaccines may cause side effects, it is important to understand that the symptoms of vaccine-preventable diseases are far more serious and can be deadly. A child is more likely to be injured by one of these diseases than any vaccine. The benefits of vaccines greatly outweigh the risks.

For more information contact the Manalapan Township Health Department:

Hours:

Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location:

Manalapan Town Hall
120 Route 522 & Taylors Mills Road, Manalapan, NJ 07726

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