

Take Actions to Stay Healthy; Immunization Clinic YTHC

The number of children in the community with all their shots has been slowly decreasing. Immunizations are important to each individual child, family and the overall health of the community. I would like to take this opportunity to share an important message from the President of American Academy of Pediatrics, Renée R. Jenkins, MD, FAAP.

“...Prior to the creation of many of the vaccines available today, thousands and sometimes millions -- of children became infected with diseases that often resulted in lifelong disabilities or, even worse, death. These diseases were contagious, meaning they were easily spread between children. Thankfully, we now have the ability to immunize children and adolescents against contagious, preventable and sometimes deadly diseases.

Immunization success stories, however, can lead parents to think that diseases like polio, whooping cough, and measles no longer exist...but they do. Because many parents today have never seen a child with whooping cough, for example, they mistakenly may think of it as simply a mild childhood disease. According to the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, whooping cough causes coughing that lasts for weeks, even months. Coughing spells can lead to problems breathing, eating and sleeping. In serious cases, coughing may cause broken ribs or hospitalization. In 2005, 8 infants died in a whooping cough outbreak in Texas.

Whooping cough is on the rise in the United States, across all age groups. More than 20,000 cases were identified in the U.S. in 2005, but the vast majority go unreported. Experts estimate there may actually be up to one million cases every year. That's why we have to be diligent about vaccinating our children and adolescents against illnesses. The fact that we don't see certain diseases anymore doesn't mean they no longer exist...it simply means the vaccines are working. They will continue to work, however, only as long as we continue to immunize our children.”

More immunization information can be found on the American Academy of Pediatrics home page (www.aap.org/). Immunizations not only provide protection for the children and adolescents in our community, they also provide protection for our Elders against pneumonia, shingles and the flu as they become more susceptible with age. These immunizations and other updates are available at Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center.

With this in mind I would like to invite you to participate in an all day immunization clinic Monday, August 11. It is open to all beneficiaries of Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center.

We especially encourage all our Elders and youth to take advantage of this opportunity, and to be proactive to “Be Healthy”. We look forward to seeing each one of you there.

Jennifer Hinds
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