

Panhandle

Public Health District

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Put Routine Vaccinations at the Top of Your Back-to-School Checklist

As summer wraps up and families prepare for the school year ahead, one of the most important items on your back-to-school checklist should be routine vaccinations. August is National Immunization Awareness Month — a reminder that staying up to date on vaccines protects students and the broader community from serious illness.

"Vaccinations are one of the most effective ways to keep children in school, healthy, and ready to learn," said Tina Cook, RN & Public Health Nurse at Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD). "When kids are protected, they miss fewer days of school and can focus on learning and growing."

Why Vaccinations Matter

Whether you're a parent, caregiver, teacher, or employer, here are five key reasons why staying current on vaccinations is critical:

- Vaccines have saved lives for over a century – but preventable diseases still pose a threat.
 - Thanks to vaccines, diseases like measles, whooping cough, and polio have become far less common. However, outbreaks can still occur—especially when vaccination rates decline, as we're seeing with measles currently circulating in parts of the U.S.
- Vaccines are the best line of defense against preventable disease.
 - They train your immune system to fight infections effectively, reducing the risk of getting seriously ill.
- Vaccines can prevent long-term complications.
 - Some illnesses, such as meningitis or HPV-related cancers, can lead to lifelong health issues—but are preventable through vaccination.
- Vaccines are safe and rigorously tested.
 - All vaccines go through extensive clinical trials and continuous monitoring by organizations like the CDC and FDA.
- Vaccines are often required.
 - Many schools, employers, and travel destinations require proof of vaccination for attendance or entry.

Support for Employers and Families



Cook added, “Providing immunizations to employees helps reduce sick days and improves overall workforce health. It’s a smart investment for employers and a win for community health.”

PPHD Public Health Nurses are available to offer a full range of routine child and adult vaccines, as well as flu shots and updated COVID boosters this fall. Flexible options are available to accommodate both in-person and virtual workplaces. No insurance? No problem. Children can snag vaccines at no cost thanks to the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program.

Contact Tina Cook at tcook@pphd.ne.gov or call the PPHD office at 308-633-2866 to schedule a worksite vaccination clinic today!

For additional information about worksite wellness, visit the website www.pphd.ne.gov/pwwc.html or call Nicole Berosek at 308-279-3496. The Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council is proudly part of Panhandle Public Health District and specializes in supporting employers in the Panhandle region. We recognize that many employers support a diverse and remote workforce and offer innovative ways to overcome the challenge of working with a virtual team. We understand that many of our employers do not have full-time wellness resources and work to provide resources and training to make running a worksite wellness program as easy as possible.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.