National Immunization Awareness Month 2021

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (#NIAM). This month we want to remind everyone of the critical role vaccinations play in protecting our health and the health of our community. Now is a great time to contact your healthcare provider and make sure you are up to date with your vaccines. If you do not have a healthcare provider, call 2-1-1 San Diego to find a healthcare provider near you.

Everyone needs vaccines throughout their lifetime to protect themselves from diseases. Vaccines and boosters are needed at different stages in life to keep your immune system strong. They build immunity in the body to help us fight off infections.

Who needs vaccines and why?

- Vaccines are recommended for **pregnant women** to provide immunity and protection for both the mother and her baby against diseases during pregnancy and after birth.
- **Infants** cannot fight diseases on their own. They need vaccines at birth, 2, 4, 6, and 12-15 months of age. Once fully vaccinated, infants are protected from 14 serious diseases.
- Some vaccines require multiple doses to build immunity. **Young children** 2-6 years old need to receive additional doses of vaccines to have the best protection.
- **Children and Teens** are active at school, sports and other activities and need vaccines to keep them protected from illnesses they might be exposed to. Vaccines are also required to attend most schools in California.
- Protection provided by vaccines wears off over time. Vaccines and boosters are needed for **Adults** to keep them protected. Additional vaccines may also be recommended based on a person's job, lifestyle, or travel plans.
- **Older adults** have a harder time fighting off infections and are more likely to get sick. They may also have health conditions that put them at risk for complications from disease. Vaccines help increase immunity to keep them healthy.

COVID-19 has highlighted the important role vaccines play in keeping us healthy. We have all experienced what it's like to be vulnerable to illness. This pandemic reminds us how serious diseases are and the impact they can have when people do not have protection through natural immunity or vaccines. Diseases affect our health, our well-being, and our community. Vaccines are available to help prevent many diseases. Make sure you are protected and up to date on your vaccines.

Join us in this month-long observance to raise awareness about immunizations and the value of getting vaccinated. Promoting vaccines and getting vaccinated contributes to the *Live Well* vision of creating a Healthy, Safe, and Thriving San Diego County. Get vaccinated for your health, the health of your family, and the health of your community. Stay healthy San Diego!

Visit our National Immunization Awareness webpage to learn more.