

Dear Providers,

This newsletter is meant to keep you up to date on issues related to vaccines quickly and easily. We welcome your questions and comments. Email us at [immunization.program@ventura.org](mailto:immunization.program@ventura.org)

#### **May is Toddler Immunization Month**

Vaccine-preventable diseases, like whooping cough, influenza and hepatitis A are still present in our community and still a threat to the health of our community--including some of the most vulnerable people, our children. National Infant Immunization Week and Toddler Immunization Month celebrate the power to protect children that immunization offers. To learn more about these observances, and for downloadable materials and resources to celebrate the Week and Month, please visit our [National Infant Immunization Week and Toddler Immunization Month web page](#).



Are all the toddlers in your practice up-to-date on their vaccines? A baby's 1st birthday is not just an occasion for cake; it's an important health milestone. One-year-olds need a well-child check-up and routine vaccines. Children between 12 and 15 months old are recommended to receive Hep A, MMR, Varicella, Hib, and PCV. Kids 15-18 months old need a 4th dose of DTaP. Some patients might need a catch-up dose or a flu vaccine, so check every child's shot record at every visit. **Never miss an opportunity to vaccinate.**

[EZIZ.org](http://EZIZ.org) has lots of great staff resources. Download and review these today:

#### **Standards for Adult Immunization Practice**

Some clinics in the county offer VFA (Vaccine for Adults) at no cost or low cost for those who qualify. You can contact the immunization program @ 805-981-5211 for a list of clinics.

Why should adult immunization be a priority for your practice?

1. **Your patients are probably not getting the vaccines they need.** Even though most private insurance plans cover the cost of recommended vaccines, adult vaccination rates in the United States are extremely low. Each year, tens of thousands of adults needlessly suffer, are hospitalized, and even die because of diseases that could be prevented by vaccines.
2. **Your patients are likely not aware that they need vaccines.** Although adults do believe immunization is important, many don't know which vaccines are recommended for them throughout their lives. Many also report not receiving vaccine recommendations from their healthcare professional.
3. **You play a critical role in ensuring that your patients are fully immunized.** Clinicians are the most valued and trusted source of health information for adults. Your patients rely on you to inform them about the vaccines they need. Research shows that a recommendation from their healthcare professional is the top predictor of patients getting vaccinated.

#### **U.S Measles cases for 2019 climbs to 626**

On April 24, CDC posted its latest updated number of 2019 measles cases in the U.S. on its [Measles Cases and Outbreaks](#) web page, now increased to 626 cases across 22 states (as of April 19). This number reflects an increase of 71 cases over the previous week's total of 555, with the outbreaks now including one additional state.

CDC sent a statement to immunization partners outlining important measles information to share with others. Portions of the statement are reprinted below.

There have been multiple outbreaks of measles in the U.S. So far this year, there have been 626 cases in 22 states. This is the second-greatest number of cases reported in the U.S. since measles was eliminated in 2000. We anticipate there will be continued opportunities for measles to spread as we continue through the spring travel season and into early summer.

Measles is highly contagious and spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Healthcare professionals should be vigilant about measles.

- Ensure all patients are up to date on MMR vaccine.
- Consider measles in patients presenting with febrile rash illness and clinically compatible measles symptoms (cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis). Patients exposed to measles while traveling for Passover could begin to develop symptoms between late April through mid-May.
- Ask patients about recent travel internationally or to domestic venues frequented by international travelers, as well as a history of measles exposures in their communities.
- **Promptly isolate patients with suspected measles to avoid disease spread and immediately report the suspect measles case to the health department.**
- Obtain specimens for testing from patients with suspected measles, including viral specimens for genotyping, which can help determine the source of the virus. Contact the local health department with questions about submitting specimens for testing.

Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 9 of 10 people around them will also become infected if they are not protected. The virus can cause serious health complications, such as pneumonia or encephalitis, and even death.

CDC continues to encourage parents to get their children vaccinated on schedule with the MMR vaccine.

People 6 months and older should be protected with the vaccine before leaving on international trips.

For additional information and resources on measles, please visit the [CDC's measles website](#).

Access additional information about U.S. measles cases in 2019 on CDC's [Measles Cases and Outbreaks](#) web page.

### **Hepatitis Testing Day – May 19**

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month and May 19th is national Hepatitis Testing Day in the United States.

Millions of Americans have chronic viral hepatitis and most of them do not know they are infected. Hepatitis Testing Day is an opportunity to remind health care providers and the public who should be tested for viral hepatitis.

#### **Four Things You Should Know About Viral Hepatitis:**

1. **Hepatitis A, hepatitis B and hepatitis C are all different diseases.**
2. **Chronic hepatitis is a leading cause of liver cancer.**
3. **Most people with chronic hepatitis do not know they are infected.**
4. **Getting tested could save your life.**

Take CDC's [Hepatitis Risk Assessment](#) to see who should be tested for viral hepatitis.

### **VFC PROVIDERS:**

#### **2018-2019 Influenza Vaccine Update:**

Although this year's flu season is coming to an end, please keep the following information in mind:

- Flu activity continues to decrease, though sporadic activity may continue until the season is over.
- If you have patients 6 months and older in your practice who have not yet received their annual influenza vaccine or who may need their second dose and/or you have children with a long-term health condition like asthma, diabetes and heart disease, please ensure they are fully vaccinated and optimally protected against influenza.
- VFC has adequate flu vaccine supplies still available to support your continuing flu vaccination efforts.
- Check your flu vaccine expiration dates as some doses will expire in late May or June.
- Flu vaccine is good until expiration. **Do not** remove viable vaccine doses from your storage unit prior to expiration. This will result in preventable negligent vaccine wastage.
- Upon expiration, remove expired doses from your vaccine storage unit immediately. Complete and submit a VFC Return Form and request a return shipment label by logging into your MyVFCVaccines account on [www.eziz.org](http://www.eziz.org).

*Keep in mind that all VFC communications are always posted on VFC's website, [www.eziz.org](http://www.eziz.org)*

*You can also view this information on <http://www.vchca.org/immunization-program>*

**or follow us on:**



**Ventura County Public Health Immunization Program**

Phone: (805) 981-5211 Fax: (805) 981-5210 [immunization.program@ventura.org](mailto:immunization.program@ventura.org)