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To: All Local Media

From: R. Joseph Ebel RS, MS, MBA, Health Commissioner
Contact: Nancy Hanger R.N., Nursing Director

Subject: Back to School Vaccines and More!

The Licking County Health Department would like to remind parents of preschoolers, teens, or college freshmen that they have only a short period of time until school starts and they need to make sure their child's immunizations are current.

For children entering Kindergarten, your child should have a fifth dose of DTaP, fourth dose of Polio, and a second dose of MMR and Varicella (Chicken pox). A series of Hepatitis B is also required but this vaccine is often given in infancy. Other vaccines given during the first two years of life include HIB, Hepatitis A, Rotavirus, and Pneumococcal vaccines. These are not required for school entry as the risk for these diseases are more prevalent at a younger age.

For children 10-18, vaccines recommended for adequate protection include Tdap, Meningococcal, Human Papillomavirus (HPV) for girls only, and a second dose of MMR and Varicella (Chickenpox) if they have only had one previous dose of either.

For college freshmen, universities may vary on their requirements. It is important to complete your health care forms early and get the vaccines needed as soon as possible. Most colleges recommend, if not require, the Meningococcal vaccine (Menactra). This vaccine, which is provided by the Ohio Department of Health, can be obtained at a reasonable price if given prior to age 19 at Licking County Health Department. Once the student turns 19, the vaccine is only available by privately purchasing it and the cost increases significantly.

This age requirement is also true with HPV vaccine; the student must qualify by meeting state eligibility requirements and must complete the series before turning age 19.

Hepatitis B vaccine requirements are a little different. State provided vaccine may be given to any student as long as the vaccine is started by age 18 and completed before the students 20th birthday.

For adults in high risk occupations and students not qualifying for state provided vaccines, many of these vaccines are available through a private purchase program and are administered at Licking County Health Department

Another program available at Licking County Health Department is the Travel Clinic. This program provides counseling and administration of vaccines necessary to go to various foreign countries. If a trip is being planned out of the United States, it is important to call and set up an appointment for vaccines early. Some vaccines require a series of doses.

For questions concerning clinic availability or costs, please call the Licking County Health Department at 740-349-6535.