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## **The Power to Protect Against Vaccine-Preventable Diseases**

The Iroquois County Public Health Department (ICPHD) is recognizing National Immunization Awareness Month this August. This annual observance highlights the importance of getting recommended vaccines throughout your life. You have the power to protect yourself and your family against serious diseases like whooping cough, measles, and pneumonia.

When young children receive vaccines they are provided with immunity before they are exposed to 14 potentially serious, even life-threatening diseases such as pneumonia, whooping cough, rotavirus, measles, mumps, chickenpox and polio. As children enter into middle school they receive vaccines to protect against additional diseases such as meningitis, HPV (human papilloma virus), tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough. All children six months and older can receive an annual flu vaccine to protect against seasonal influenza.

Vaccines aren't just for kids. Adults need vaccines to protect against whooping cough, the flu, pneumonia, and shingles. If you have diabetes, some illnesses like influenza can make it harder to control your blood sugar. When adults are vaccinated it also helps protect the young children in their care who may not be old enough to get the vaccines themselves.

Pregnant women have the power to protect themselves and their baby from serious diseases like whooping cough and influenza. When a pregnant woman is vaccinated her baby receives protection through her antibodies that are passed on to the baby. Some diseases, like influenza, are more serious for pregnant women. Changes in the immune system, heart, and lungs during pregnancy make pregnant women more prone to severe illness from influenza. Additionally, risk of premature labor and delivery is increased in pregnant women with influenza.

Talk with your doctor to find out which vaccines your family needs. The Iroquois County Public Health Department also has vaccines available for children and adults. Call the health department at 815-432-2483 for more information or to schedule an appointment.