

NEWS RELEASE

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Missoula City-County Health Department to Host Back-to-School Immunization Clinic

The Missoula City-County Health Department will host their first ever back-to-school immunization clinic this Wednesday, Aug. 23, to provide parents and guardians with a convenient opportunity for their children to receive required vaccinations for the upcoming school year.

The clinic will take place from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Western Montana Fairgrounds Home Arts Building, located off South Avenue. The department's Immunization Clinic at 301 W. Alder St. will be closed during this time.

All vaccinations required for Missoula area public schools will be available for children in kindergarten through 7th grade. Parents and guardians should bring a photo ID, their child's vaccination records and their insurance card. For those who do not have insurance, MCCHD takes part in the Vaccine for Children program, which offers those who qualify a sliding fee scale for low to no-cost vaccinations.

Available kindergarten vaccines include:

- DTaP (prevents diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis/whooping cough in young children)
- IPV (prevents polio)
- MMR (prevents measles, mumps and rubella)
- Varicella (prevents chickenpox)

Available 7th grade booster vaccines include:

- Tdap (prevents diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis/whooping cough in children ages 11 and older)
- HPV (prevents human papilloma virus)
- Meningitis (prevents meningitis)

COVID-19 and flu vaccines will not be available at the back-to-school clinic but will be available in the coming months.

"We recognize that the pandemic impacted families' access to routine care, including routine immunizations," said Sara Heineman, director of Health Services at MCCHD. "It's important to maintain certain thresholds of vaccine immunity as that is what provides 'herd immunity' or 'community immunity.' Lowering those protective thresholds

puts everyone at risk of communicable diseases, such as measles and pertussis. This can result in lost school days for students and teachers, missed work for parents to care for sick children, and costs associated with medical care and sometimes hospitalization.”

Hosting events such as vaccination clinics to support healthy people, environments and communities helps ensure MCCHD remains an accredited health department. Accreditation means MCCHD meets standards for excellence in providing public health services. The status is voluntary, meaning it's not required; however, health departments that are accredited work to have the highest quality of public health services. MCCHD has also developed a performance management system to ensure improvements are constantly being made to services and systems.

In 2014, MCCHD was among the first 33 health departments nationwide to receive an accredited status through the Public Health Accreditation Board. MCCHD was one of 52 health departments to receive reaccreditation in 2020.

Those who are unable to attend the clinic this Wednesday can visit the health department's walk-in clinic Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and by appointment on Wednesdays.

Those with questions about the Immunization Clinic can call MCCHD at 406-258-3363. Those with questions about accreditation can contact Accreditation and Workforce Development Coordinator Michael Garder at mgarder@missoulacounty.us.

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