

Word count: 279

Immunization Protects Us All

Children in the U.S. still get vaccine-preventable diseases. For example, so far in 2015, more than 100 people across the United States have been reported to have measles. Measles is very contagious. It can spread through the air when people with measles cough or sneeze. It is so contagious that if one person has it, 9 out of 10 people around him or her will also become infected if they are not protected. An infected person can spread measles to others even before knowing he or she has measles—up to 4 days before the telltale measles rash appears.

Your children's health is a priority to us. Children younger than 5 years of age are at risk for a serious case of measles if they get it. So we would like to remind you to keep your children up to date on their vaccines. That means make sure they get their first dose of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine at 12 through 15 months, and a second dose when they are 4 through 6 years old.

We care for children of many ages, and some of them are too young to be protected by vaccination. For example, children younger than 6 months of age cannot get MMR vaccine. Others may not be able to receive certain vaccinations due to severe allergies, weakened immune systems from conditions like leukemia, or other reasons. To help keep them all safe, it is important that you and your children who are able to get vaccinated are fully immunized. This not only protects your family but also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your child's friends in our classrooms.

For more information about the importance of infant immunization, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines> or check out the Disease Prevention & Immunization tab on the right. Pierce County Health Department can offer immunizations to children who are Medicaid eligible, uninsured, under-insured (insurance does not cover vaccines), American Indians or Alaska Natives. If you have questions or would like to schedule an appointment, please feel free to call the Health Department.