

Immunize Georgia



A publication of the Georgia Department of Public Health

SPRING 2019



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April 27 – May 4, 2019

! National Infant Immunization Week

National Infant Immunization Week is April 27 - May 4, 2019, and the Georgia Department of Public Health urges all health care providers to encourage and recommend infant immunizations to parents and caregivers.

We have reached several important milestones in controlling vaccine preventable diseases among infants worldwide. Vaccines have drastically reduced infant death and disability caused by preventable diseases in the United States. Through immunization, we can now protect infants and children from 14 vaccine preventable diseases before age two.



However, there is still more to do. From January 1 - April 11, 2019, 555 individual cases of measles were confirmed in 20 states, including 3 cases in Georgia. All three individuals in Georgia were not vaccinated. Vaccination is the best defense against infectious diseases in infants.

Infant Immunization Activities:

- Provide parents or caregivers with brochures like *GRITS*, *Vaccines For Children* or *Hop To It* to take home and review.
- Encourage your health department to order promotional materials.
- Change your email signature to include a NIIW message.
- Use social media to post NIIW messages.

Take Action By:

1. Talking to the child's parents or caregiver about recommendations for routine infant vaccinations.
2. Giving the child's parents or caregiver updates on whether their child is up-to-date on his or her vaccinations.
3. Becoming familiar with the CDC's recommended childhood immunization schedule that is designed to protect infants and children early in life, when they are most vulnerable.
4. Giving the child's parents or caregiver the facts on why their infant needs to be vaccinated. •

Sources:
<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>
<https://dph.georgia.gov/>

! Vaccine Preventable Viral Hepatitis

The term “hepatitis” refers to the inflammation of the liver, which can be caused by multiple factors, such as alcohol or substance abuse, toxins, medications, autoimmune disease, and both bacterial and viral infections. There are five types of viral hepatitis (A, B, C, D and E); however, hepatitis A, B and C are the most common. Hepatitis A and B are both vaccine preventable. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C.

Symptoms of viral hepatitis can include fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements, joint or muscle pain and/or jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes). Not everyone will experience symptoms (or all of these symptoms) when first infected with viral hepatitis.

Hepatitis A Virus (HAV)

HAV is spread through fecal-oral contact, typically through close contact with someone who is infected with HAV and/or contaminated food or water. Hepatitis A Virus is an acute infection in which most people will resolve the infection within 6 months of exposure. Once resolved, the person will develop lifelong immunity against HAV.

HAV is vaccine preventable. The vaccine is a two-dose series and is recommended for:

- children at 1 year of age
- people traveling to countries with a high incidence of HAV
- men who have sex with men
- illicit drug users (injection and non-injection)
- homeless individuals
- individuals with chronic liver disease, such as chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C

The hepatitis A vaccine can provide pre- and post-exposure protection. If someone has been exposed to HAV and has not been vaccinated against HAV, then it is recommended that anyone over 12 months of age receive the hepatitis A vaccine as post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Immune Globulin (IG) can be provided for contacts that are less than 12 months of age or anyone who is immunocompromised or has chronic liver disease. PEP must be provided within 14 days of the last exposure. (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6743a5.htm>)

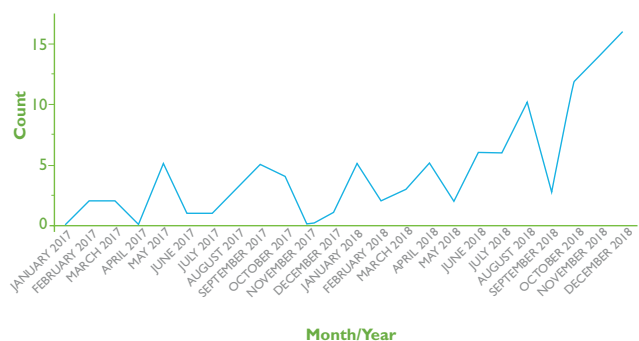


Hepatitis A Virus (HAV) and Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) are vaccine preventable.

Since March 2017, many states have experienced HAV outbreaks, spread through close person-to-person contact. These outbreaks have been occurring primarily among those who use injection and non-injection drugs, homeless individuals, and their close contacts. Increases in HAV infection are also being seen among men who have sex with men.

Georgia experienced a 250 percent increase in HAV infections in 2018, compared to 2017. Similar to the trends in other state outbreaks, HAV infections in Georgia in 2018 were primarily among injection and non-injection drug users, men who have sex with men, and their close contacts. These increases are continuing in 2019.

Confirmed HAV Infections, Georgia, 2017-2018



Source: GA DPH State Electronic Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (SendSS)



Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)

HBV is spread through exposure to blood or body fluids. Transmission most commonly occurs through sexual contact, injection drug use, having a close household contact, and perinatal exposure (from an infected mother to baby at birth). Pregnant women should be tested for Hepatitis B Surface Antigen (HBsAg) during each pregnancy.

Most people who become infected with HBV will recover within six months; however, many will develop a chronic (lifelong) infection. Babies infected at birth by an infected mother have a 90 percent chance of developing chronic hepatitis B infection. Those infected as adults have a 10 percent chance of developing chronic infection.

Hepatitis B is vaccine preventable. The vaccine is a three-dose series and is recommended for:

- all children from birth to 18 years of age
- men who have sex with men
- illicit drug users
- those with multiple sex partners
- those with a recent STD diagnosis
- homeless adults
- household contacts and sexual partners of HBV-positive individuals
- individuals with HIV and/or chronic hepatitis C infection

Approximately 5 percent of people do not develop immunity after completing the vaccine series. Blood tests are available to test for immunity to ensure individuals are protected; however, this is not a routinely recommended practice except for specific risk groups such as, infants born to hepatitis B infected women or HIV-positive individuals. •



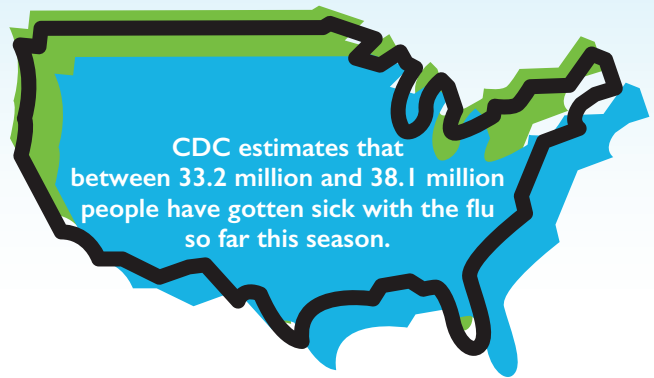
! 2019 Influenza Activity

With the 2018-2019 flu season well underway, influenza A (H1N1) viruses have swept the United States. In fact, CDC estimates that between 33.2 million and 38.1 million people have gotten sick with the flu so far this season. Between 452,000 and 549,000 people have been hospitalized.

Since the flu season began in October, the illness has killed 29 people in Georgia – 27 adults and two children. More than 1,507 people have been hospitalized in metro Atlanta due to flu symptoms.

During week 14 (March 31 - April 6, 2019) widespread influenza activity was reported by 20 states including Georgia.

Even though the incidence numbers are lower than previous years, the flu can be serious, unpredictable and



can cause a significant burden on people's health. CDC and DPH urge health care providers continue to make clear, strong recommendations for the flu vaccine to their patients – it's the best protection we have against the seasonal flu. •

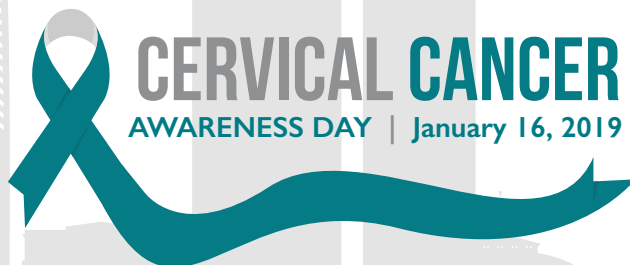
Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/news/newsletters/imwrks/2019/2019-01.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>

👍 Cervical Cancer Awareness Day

The second annual Cervical Cancer Awareness Day was held at the Georgia Capitol on January 16, 2019. Several organizations and groups were recognized for their continued efforts in reducing the burden of disease in Georgia caused by cervical cancer and other cancers caused by HPV. The HPV Champion Awards were presented to the American Cancer Society, Inc., Southeast Region; Robert A. Bednarczyk, PhD; Georgia Clinic-West End; Sumter Pediatrics Montezuma and Clifton Springs Health Center. A resolution was read on the house floor by State Representative Teri Anulewicz. You can view the morning order at the following link: <https://youtu.be/goAA8i3F8dg>. •





Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner / Brian Kemp, Governor

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LETTER SENT APRIL 3, 2019 REGARDING NEW MCV4 SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Dear Educator:

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness that affects the brain and the spinal cord in the form of meningitis, and the bloodstream in the form of septicemia. It can cause shock, coma, and death within hours of the first symptoms.

To help protect your students and others from meningococcal disease, Georgia law will soon require students be vaccinated against this disease unless the child has an exemption.

Effective July 1, 2020, children 16 years of age and older who are entering the 11th grade (including new entrants) must have received one booster dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4), unless their initial dose was administered on or after their 16th birthday.

If students have not been vaccinated against meningococcal disease, we strongly recommend they visit their doctor or health care provider to get their MCV4 booster shot. Getting MCV4 now will not only help protect students against the ongoing threat of meningitis but will also meet the new school entry requirement.

I ask that you share this important information with superintendents and school administrators. Together we can educate parents and encourage them to talk with their pediatrician or local health department about meningococcal and other vaccines their child may need, including:

- the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine series
- the tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis vaccine (Tdap or Td booster)
- an annual flu vaccine
- catch-up immunizations, including varicella, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and hepatitis B

Parents of students without health insurance or those whose health plan does not cover these vaccines, may call their local health department and ask about getting no or low cost vaccines. For more information, visit <http://dph.georgia.gov/vaccines-children> or call (800)848-3868.

Thank you for all that you do for Georgia students.

Sincerely,
Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner & State Health Officer

We protect lives.



Mark Your Calendars: 2019 Immunize Georgia Conference

Educate. Collaborate. Vaccinate.

The Georgia Department of Public Health is proud to announce the 26th Annual Immunize Georgia Conference will be held at Sonesta Gwinnett Place Atlanta **Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019.**

Our annual Immunize Georgia Conference provides the latest requirements and news. The conference connects public and private health practitioners for a common cause: improving Georgia's immunization rates and protecting every adult and child from vaccine preventable diseases.

The 2019 Immunize Georgia Conference will cover new recommendations, vaccine hesitancy, adult immunizations, GRITS, vaccine storage handling, immunization assessments and more.



Visit immunizegeorgia.com for questions about the conference.

Georgia Department of Public Health presents the
26TH ANNUAL
Immunize Georgia
CONFERENCE

Sonesta Gwinnett Place Atlanta
1775 Pleasant Hill Road
Duluth, GA 30096

EDUCATE.

COLLABORATE.

VACCINATE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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www.immunizegeorgia.com

DPH
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

SAVE THE DATE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

The Immunize Georgia conference is a great way to obtain credit hours. We provide CME, CNE (contact hours) and CE credits for physicians, RNs, pharmacists and pharmacy techs. We issue certificates of completion to all other attendees including medical assistants, clinical staff, medical/nursing/pharmacy students and others involved in immunization services.

This year we are excited to welcome renowned keynote speakers including:

- **JoEllen Wolicki, RN, BSN**, Nurse Educator at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- **Robert Bednarczyk, PhD**, Hubert Department of Global Health, Emory University

Registration will open soon. If you have any questions about the conference, please visit us online at www.immunizegeorgia.com, email us at ImmunizeGeorgia@golin.com or call us at 470-419-8666. •