

News Release - For immediate release
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Help Prevent Childhood Illnesses by Getting Up-to-Date with Vaccines

DOVER- During a recent training by the Ohio Department of Health's Immunization Program on the topic of vaccination rates for school-aged children, an updated statistic showed that childhood vaccinations decreased in Ohio. For the 2018-2019 school year, 89.1% of Ohio's enrolled kindergarten students had all required immunizations, compared to only 86.5% of enrolled kindergarten students for the 2022-2023 school year. Additionally, during a 2022 Measles outbreak in Central Ohio, 80 of the 82 cases were among unvaccinated children.

"Seeing the data and the rise of vaccine-preventable diseases is concerning because it makes it more likely that we will continue to see vaccine-preventable diseases due to low vaccination rates," explained Amy Kaser, Director of Nursing for the Tuscarawas County Health Department (TCHD). "According to Merriam-Webster, 'immunity is a condition of being able to resist a particular disease, especially through preventing development of a pathogenic microorganism or by counteracting the effects of its products.' Broken down, this means the job of our immune system is to protect our body from things that don't belong there like viruses, bacteria, etc."

The immune system has a variety of functions such as seeking and destroying viruses, bacteria, and other germs. The immune system can remember the germs and will fight them off more quickly if the germ enters the body again. By remembering the germ and sending antibodies quickly to destroy the germs, the individual may not get sick.

For children who are not vaccinated and are exposed to a disease such as measles for the first time, the potential problem is the child cannot produce the antibodies needed to fight off the germs. As a result, the child is more likely to become sick.

Many of the vaccine preventable diseases can have long lasting side effects. For example, Pertussis (Whooping Cough) may seem like a very bad cold. However, according to the CDC, there can be several life-threatening complications that can occur such as apnea (pauses in breathing), pneumonia (lung infection), and convulsions.

"There is a generation that had to live through polio, smallpox, and other diseases because there was not a vaccine produced yet to decrease the occurrence of the disease," stated Kaser, "but now we have vaccines, so our children don't have to face the serious, long-term effects of these preventable diseases."

Vaccines are important to protecting children's health and preventing the spread of serious diseases. TCHD offers back-to-school vaccination appointments for children of all ages and income levels. Services are covered through most private insurance plans. Thanks to a vaccine for children program grant from

the Ohio Department of Health, appointments are also available for those without insurance, those who are underinsured, and those with Medicaid. If you would like to make an appointment, or would like more information about vaccines, please call 330-343-5555, ext. 1810, or visit the TCHD website at www.tchdnow.org.

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[Immunity Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster](#)

[Complications of Whooping Cough \(Pertussis\) | CDC](#)

CDC Parent's Guide to Childhood Immunizations