

National Immunization Week

April 25 - May 2, 2009

by *Diane Chism, RN*

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and to celebrate any achievements of immunization providers in their community. Community organizations and local health departments can play an important role in ensuring that all our children are appropriately immunized by age two. Health care providers should actively communicate with parents and caregivers about immunizations, especially when improvements in vaccines result in changes to the routine immunization schedule.

Vaccines remain the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death from vaccine preventable diseases. They not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious disease.

The Kentucky Immunization Program encourages local health departments, private physicians and community organizations to plan activities that will educate parents about immunizations by holding activities during National Infant Immunization Week. Some examples are:

- Highlight the importance and benefits of childhood immunizations especially to new parents by visiting prenatal classes and providing educational materials on vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Collaborate with outside partners by holding health fairs and celebrate any accomplishments that have been achieved.
- Write articles for local newspapers showcasing the importance of immunizations for their children and publish the most current state and national immunization rates.

If your community hosts an NIIW activity, please send information about that activity to the Kentucky Department for Public Health so it can be posted to the NIIW Activities for 2009 Web page. Send e-mail to Diane Chism, RN at Diane.Chism@ky.gov or call (502) 564-4478, ext. 3513, to report those activities or if you have additional questions.

Additional information regarding NIIW can be by following [this link](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/default.htm) (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/default.htm>).

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