



BRAZOS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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News Release

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For Immediate Release

National Adult Immunization Awareness Week, September 25 – October 1, 2006

Despite the many advances in modern medicine, each year thousands of people in the U.S. die from diseases that are easily prevented by safe and effective vaccines. The Brazos County Health Department supports National Adult Immunization Awareness Week (NAIAW), which begins Sunday, September 25th and continues through Saturday, October 1st. NAIAW is intended to raise awareness about the importance of adult and adolescent immunization.

Although most adults realize that immunizations play an important role in keeping infants and children healthy, many are unaware that readily available vaccines offer a safe and cost-effective way to prevent serious illnesses and death among adolescents and adults. As many as 50,000 adults in the U.S. die each year from vaccine-preventable diseases or their complications. By preventing illness, vaccination saves healthcare dollars by keeping people healthy and avoiding the expensive therapies and hospitalizations needed to treat illnesses like influenza and pneumococcal disease. Immunizations help reduce absences at work, school and social events, and decrease the spread of illness in the home, workplace and community.

Influenza causes more than 100,000 hospitalizations and an average of 36,000 deaths each year in the U.S. Individuals with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma, or heart disease are particularly at risk of influenza infection, as are people in nursing, convalescent, or other institutional settings. People 50 years of age or older are urged to get the influenza vaccine annually. This year, influenza immunization will be available in October for those people and will be available beginning in November for all others seeking protection from influenza and its complications.

People 65 years of age and older and those with certain other medical conditions are also at higher risk for severe illness caused by pneumococcal disease. More than 40,000 people in the U.S. die each year from this disease. The risk of pneumococcal infections and complications can be reduced or eliminated with the pneumococcal vaccine. The costs of both the influenza and pneumococcal vaccines are covered under Medicare Part B.

Brazos County Health Department reminds all adults and adolescents that safe and effective vaccines are available to protect them against other potentially life-threatening diseases such as tetanus, diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox).

For more information on adolescent and adult immunizations, contact the Brazos County Health Department at (979) 361-4440 or visit our website at www.brazoshealth.org

(News Media: for more information contact Marcy Hosking, (979) 361-4440.)