

Monterey County Health Department Preparedness Minute

Back to School



Another summer has flown by and it is time for the kids to go back to school. Preparing to go back to school includes that trip to buy new crayons, pencils, notebooks and maybe even shoes and it is also a good time to make sure your child is prepared for potential emergencies.

Prepare for Medical Emergencies

The American College of Emergency Physicians urges parents to make sure their children's schools have children's most recent information to ensure they receive prompt medical attention and do not have to take the time to get parental consent or track down medical records. They offer these tips to help you with the process:

- Complete a consent-to-treat form, and give copies to the school or daycare for them to keep in your child's record and to take with them if your child goes to the emergency department. It is also a good idea to give copies to family members, friends or babysitters who may care for your child. Your child will always get lifesaving care in an emergency room, but the form, gives a physician permission to treat your child for less serious medical problems when he or she is in someone else's care. Caregivers should make sure to bring the form with them if they take your child to the emergency department.
- Organize your child's medical history records and update emergency medical contact information. Provide a copy of this information to your child's school and daycare provider with instructions to take it with them to the emergency department if your child is sick or injured. Phone numbers change often; make sure you update emergency contact information as needed.



Preparing Young Children

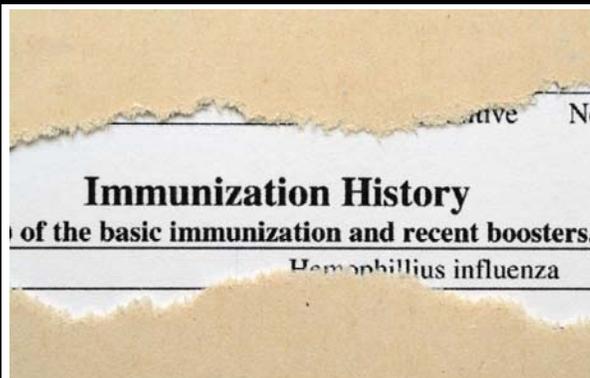


When children are getting ready for school it's a good idea to remind them of some basic safety rules.

- Review and do a "dry run" of your child's route to school, explaining potential hazards along the way. This is a great opportunity to talk about safety rules for going to and from school.
- Make sure your children know how to use a telephone for help. Post emergency contact numbers by every phone in your home. Have them practice the information they will be asked if they call 911; name, address and a description of the problem,
- Develop a family emergency plan in case something happens on the way to, or while attending school.

Source: American College of Emergency Physicians, <http://www.acep.org/patients.aspx?id=26132>

The purpose of this short publication is to inform Monterey County staff about preparedness issues ranging from emerging communicable diseases to personal preparedness. If there is a specific topic you or your staff are interested in please contact the Preparedness Program at klahnk@co.monterey.ca.us.



Protect Children with Vaccinations

Whenever children are brought into group settings like school or daycare, there is risk for the spread of disease. Teaching children good health habits like coughing into their sleeve and washing their hands frequently is one way to help prevent the spread of disease. Another way is to make sure your family is up-to-date on their vaccines.

All students are required to be protected from polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B and varicella (chickenpox) to enter school. Most children need booster shots before they start kindergarten. Teens and adults also need vaccines to protect them from illnesses.

Make a “back-to-school” appointment for your children and teens. There are some new vaccines that might be needed. Your doctor or provider can answer questions about vaccines and the diseases they prevent. Bring your shot record (yellow card) and ask if your child is up-to-date with the following vaccines:

- **Tdap** is a fairly new vaccine that is recommended for 11-12 year olds, and one dose is recommended for all adults in place of their next tetanus shot. It contains protection against pertussis (whooping cough) that adults and teens need. If you can’t remember the last time you had a tetanus shot, it’s probably time.
- **Meningococcal** vaccine is recommended for all pre-teens 11-12. Students that are college bound should also be protected against this deadly disease.
- **HPV** is a new vaccine for women and girls 11-26 years of age. It protects against the Human Papillomavirus that can cause cervical cancer.
- **Varicella** (chicken pox) vaccine booster dose might be needed. Most students had one dose of varicella to get into school. A second dose is needed. Adults that have not had a case of chicken pox would also benefit from this vaccine.



Research shows that vaccines are a safe and effective way to protect your children. There are myths about the safety of vaccines. Unfortunately, these rumors can cause parents to delay vaccinating their children or not protect them at all. This leaves children at risk for the serious preventable diseases that we still see in Monterey County. If you are concerned, talk to your health care provider or visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

Add a Whistle to your School Shopping List

One of the most valuable emergency items you can buy costs less than a can of soda. Consider adding a whistle for each child to your back to school shopping list. A whistle’s sound will carry much further than a voice and it will last longer.



Teach children to use the whistle when they are lost or in trouble, by using the following code to communicate: 1 blow for “Yes” 2 blows for “No” 3 blows for “S.O.S.”



This issue of *Preparedness Minute* is brought to you by the Monterey County Health Department’s Preparedness Program. For more information Contact:

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