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Barbara L. Worgess, MPH, *Chief Health Officer*

Spring 2012

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As the school year comes to an end, back-to-school vaccinations may not be at the top of your to-do list. However, parents and students can avoid facing potentially long waits in the fall by getting required school vaccinations now and over the summer. More importantly, vaccinations will protect your child from illnesses caused by infectious diseases.

Vaccines are responsible for the control of many infectious diseases that were once common in the United States, including polio, measles, diphtheria, rubella, mumps, tetanus and pertussis.

Recently, the Coconino County Public Health Services District (CCPHSD) has seen an increase in the number of pertussis or “whooping cough” cases reported. Pertussis, a vaccine preventable disease, is highly contagious. It is caused by bacteria, which are spread through the air by coughing or contact with infected fluids from the mouth, nose or throat. The symptoms of pertussis include a persistent cough, violent fits or spells of coughing, with vomiting and/or a whooping sound after coughing. Pertussis can cause an extremely severe illness in infants and young children. While the illness is milder in older children and adults, they can easily pass the disease to infants and young children. If you suspect that you or your child may have pertussis, contact your healthcare provider.

The CCPHSD strongly encourages families with infants to review their child’s immunization record with his/her health care provider to assure they are up-to-date on all their pertussis vaccine doses. All children should have three doses of DTaP vaccine by six months of age with a booster dose given at 12-15 months of age and again at 4 years old. Adolescents should have one dose of Tdap at 11-12 years old. The CCPHSD also encourages adults to receive a Tdap vaccine, which protects against pertussis, especially if they will be around any infants younger than 12 months of age. We also encourage you to make sure that your child is up-to-date on all required and recommended immunizations.

For more information about pertussis and for a complete list of required school immunization, visit www.coconino.az.gov/health.

The CCPHSD Clinic offers childhood vaccinations at the Flagstaff Clinic, 2625 N. King Street, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Vaccinations are also available at periodically scheduled CCPHSD Clinics throughout the County. Please call for more information or to make an appointment.

For more information about vaccinations, contact your healthcare provider or the CCPHSD Immunization Program at 928.679.7222 or toll-free at 1.877.679.7272.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara L. Worgess".

Barbara Worgess, MPH
Chief Health Officer