



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON
DIRECTOR

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CONTACT: Lynn Sutfin
517-241-2112
SutfinL1@michigan.gov

Michigan families urged to catch children up on needed vaccines *Childhood vaccines have declined during the COVID-19 pandemic*

LANSING, Mich. – Fewer Michigan children are currently up to date on their routine vaccines because of postponed well-child visits during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) urges families to get children and adolescents caught up on all recommended vaccines as soon as possible.

Because of the pandemic, it is especially important to ensure everyone is protected against vaccine-preventable diseases. Decreased immunization rates put Michiganders at risk for disease outbreaks. In May, a [study was published](#) in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* showing how COVID-19 has had a negative impact on routine vaccinations in Michigan. According to data from the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR), the percentage of 5-month-olds in Michigan who were fully up to date on all recommended vaccines decreased from about two-thirds during 2016-2019 to less than half in May 2020. In addition, only 53.1 percent of Michigan children 19 months through 35 months of age were fully immunized with recommended vaccines according to MCIR data.

“It is concerning that so many children are behind on their vaccinations and susceptible to preventable diseases,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health at MDHHS. “Vaccines are essential. It is important for caregivers to contact their healthcare provider to get children caught up on needed vaccines.”

Many healthcare providers are implementing new procedures to ensure patients can safely come in for well visits and to get caught up on immunizations, including checking in from the car, limiting how many people can accompany a child and requiring face masks. The CDC has released extensive [guidance](#) for healthcare providers on how to continue to provide immunization services safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the CDC, ensuring immunization services are maintained or reinitiated is essential for protecting individuals and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks, and reducing the burden of respiratory illness during the upcoming influenza season.

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“It will also be vital for everyone ages six months and older to get their flu vaccine this fall,” said Khaldun. “The influenza vaccine will help keep Michiganders out of the hospital for flu-related illnesses, saving lives and protecting our hospital capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Parents should contact their child’s healthcare provider to find out what vaccines their child needs, discuss the safety measures put in place to protect patients and schedule an appointment. If insurance coverage has been disrupted or there is concern about being able to afford childhood vaccines, the Michigan Vaccines for Children program can help. It provides vaccines for children through age 18 years who are Medicaid-eligible, uninsured, underinsured, American Indian or Alaska Native.

Parents can contact their healthcare provider or [local health department](#) for more information. Please be aware health departments remain active with the COVID-19 response and may provide limited services at this time; call ahead for details.

In an effort to help parents protect their children from serious vaccine-preventable diseases, MDHHS participates in the I Vaccinate campaign. I Vaccinate provides the facts parents need to make informed decisions about vaccinations. For more information about immunizations and the I Vaccinate campaign, visit Vaccinate.org.

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